

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N<sup>o</sup>. 255.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 1864.

[PRICE 2d.]

## QUITE ALONE.

BOOK THE FIRST: CHILDHOOD.

### CHAPTER IX. INTRODUCTORY TO A WILD ANIMAL.

RATAPLAN was entirely deficient in the Rhododendron characteristic. It was a very late house. Nobody dreamt of going to bed till one or two o'clock in the morning, save Mademoiselle Adèle, who retired at eleven, comme il convenait à une jeune personne. The French are accustomed to treat their daughters like children till they are twenty years of age, and their sons like grown up persons when they are ten. The paternal Rataplan came up from the regions of the kitchen towards eleven, and played cards or smoked a cigar with one of his guests for a couple of hours. People used to treat him to innumerable small glasses to hear him brag of his exploits during his campaigns with the Grand Army, and his colloquy with the Emperor at Montereau; although there were those of a malevolent turn of mind who insinuated that he had never been at the Beresina or at Montereau; but that happening to keep a small wine-shop at the corner of a street in Paris during the three glorious days of July, 1830, a barricade had been erected close to his door, and at a critical moment he had rushed out, and crying "Vive la Charte!" had stricken down a corporal of grenadiers with a soup ladle, whereupon he had become a décoré de Juillet.

It was half-past twelve on a summer night—I need not further particularise it, for I have not yet passed the limits of the four-and-twenty hours in the course of which all the events hitherto narrated have occurred—when Monsieur Jean Baptiste Constant, in his master's Spanish cloak, entered the marble hall of the Hôtel Rataplan, and passed into the salle à manger, as one well accustomed to the locality.

Rataplan was alone, smoking and sipping his "gzogs" (as he was accustomed to call a very little brandy with a great deal of sugar and lukewarm water), and endeavouring to spell through one of the seven days' old *Siècles*. The gallant warrior-cook's education was defective. His womankind kept his books and wrote his letters for him.

"How goes it, mon vieux? Touchez-là!" said the valet. And he extended his palm, and Rata-

plan smote his own palm thereupon, and went on reading.

"Will you smoke?" asked Rataplan, after a moment.

"Business to attend to"—the two men spoke French—"else I would first have presented my homages to the ladies. Is the countess at home?"

"Half an hour ago. Is having her supper now."

"And her little temper?"

"Ouf! n'en parlez pas. The whole menagerie of the Jardin des Plantes does not contain such a wild animal. The bear, Martin, when the nurse refused to throw him the second of her babies, when he had played off the little practical joke of eating the first, was never in such a temper. Temper! It is a mania! A delirium, an ecstasy of spasmodic and anarchical passions. That woman is all the furies rolled into one, plus Frédégonde, Clytemnestra, and Madame Croque-mitaine."

Rataplan had been a great frequenter of the Boulevard theatres in his youth, and piqued himself on his familiarity with dramatic literature. He was given, besides quoting Béranger, to spouting long harangues from tragedies, both in prose and verse.

"What is the matter with the countess?"

"Matter! what else but her diabolical, sulphureous, Mount Etna of a temper can be the matter with her? They are not words, but red-hot lava streams, that flow from her lips. You are Herculeanum and Pompeii before her, and she engulphs you. But, pardieu, she is not the Muette de Portici! She has a tongue as long as an academic discourse. There is no stopping, no satisfying, no pacifying, her. She is implacable in her rages. She comes in here, after midnight; and, without the slightest salutation, says, 'Papa Rataplan, is my supper ready?' I make her a reverence. I say, taking off my cook's cap—an act of homage I would not render to Louis Philippe, roi des Français et des pékins—'Madame told me on going out that she would take no supper.' 'What?' responds she. 'Papa Rataplan, you are a ganache! On the instant let me have oysters of Colchesterre, a trout fried, all that you have in the way of cutlets, a sweet omelette, a Charlotte aux pommes, a salade de mâches, some champagne, Burgundy, Bordeaux, and so forth.' And all this on the

instant! 'Madame,' I humbly represent, 'there are no oysters fit for the palate of a lady. There is no *salade de mâches*. Covent Garden goes to bed at eight o'clock precisely. As to the cutlets, you can have some. As to the omelette, by all means. As to the Charlotte, it is an impossibility, seeing that I have no apples—unless you would condescend to potatoes. As for the wines, you bring them with you, paying me a shilling a cork, and saying that mine are not fit to drink, so you know best. In effect, I am desolated that I cannot give you to eat as you desire; but if you would like a *mayonnaise de homard*, or some *pickelle sammone de chez ce bon Monsieur Quin* in the *Aimarkette*, in ten minutes *vous serez à votre aise*.'"

"And what does she reply?"

"She tells me to go to the five hundred devils. She outrages the *Mère Thomas*. She affronts Antoine. That woman's language smells of the stable in which she passes her time. 'Oui, Rataplan,' she says to me, '*je vous considère comme le dernier des derniers*.' And then, forsooth, she must insult my sleeping cherub, and say that poor little Adèle's pianoforte practice distracts her nerves, and that if I do not put a stop to it she must find another hotel. It is likely, eh? When I pay Signor Tripanelli half a guinea a lesson for her instruction, and know that with two years' more practice she will be the first pianiste of the world, and cause Thalberg and Chopin to hang themselves in envious despair."

"Why don't you give her her *congé*?"

Rataplan shrugged his shoulders. One does not like to lose so excellent a customer. She is worth ten guineas a week to us whenever she comes to stay at the *Hôtel Rataplan*. I should not like that Grossous, at the *Hôtel Belgiosso*, to get hold of her. Tripefourbe, of the *Hôtel du Belvédère* dans le Soho, has already endeavoured to seduce her away from us. And even the wild animal has her moments of amiability. She gave only last week to Adèle, a brooch—*malachite*, I think you call it. I saw a snuff-box made of it, which the Cossack Alexander gave to the Emperor at Tilsit. Only yesterday, she threw Adèle a cashmere, a true *cachemire des Indes*, in which she had burnt a hole with a red-hot poker, in a rage because milord did not come. Adèle will soon darn up that hole. It is a cashmere of a ravishing nature!"

"Ah! And so milord did not come, and miladi was in a rage. Perhaps she expected him to supper to-night, and his failure was the secret of her temper."

"Tiens, I think not. To be sure, she sent the commissionnaire this morning to the Albany, where milord lives, and he was out, and lo and behold, when she made her appearance this night, there was a note waiting for her—a little pink note—and having read it, she ordered the supper I told you of."

"Then milord may be coming."

"Not at all! A little jockey, with breeches of

leather and top-boots, was here not five minutes before your arrival. By word of mouth he delivered the message that his master was very sorry, but could not come. Antoine went up and told her. She flew into one of her sulphureous ecstasies, and nearly strangled him."

"It is now half-past twelve. Is she gone to bed?"

"To bed! She won't seek her couch till three. She will scold that unhappy Barquette, her *femme de chambre*, till past two. Then she will walk about the room, and smoke like a sapper, and swear like a cuirassier, for another hour. To bed! It is lucky for her bed that she goes to it so late. She must quarrel with the bolster, and kick the counterpane all night."

"I think you had better announce me."

"I warn you that she is exceedingly ferocious to-night, and that grave results may follow even my intrusion to announce you."

"Have no fear. She may bite, but I don't fear her barking. I have been a keeper in the *Jardin des Plantes*, and am not afraid of wild animals. Allons, mon bon. Do as I tell you."

Rataplan rose with anything but a good grace, and murmuring something about the inexpediency of bearding tigresses in their den. He shuffled up stairs. Constant heard him timorously tap at a door. Then there was a tempest of words audible—confined, however, to a single voice; and after a while the host descended to the *salle à manger* again, with something positively approaching a faint violet flush on his pale face.

"I told you so," he said. "She is a panther of the Island of Java. A beautiful jaguar. However, if you are fond of wild beasts, there she is. Go, my friend, and be devoured. And he sat down, drew the candle closer to him, mixed himself a fresh tumbler of "*gzog*," re-illuminated the butt-end of his cigar—a Frenchman never desists until the weed begins to burn the tip of his nose, and then he sticks the stump on the point of a penknife—and so resumed his perusal of the *Siècle* seven days old.

Monsieur Constant went quietly up-stairs, and softly laid his hand upon the handle of the door of the front drawing-room. I must keep Monsieur Constant with his hand upon the handle for the space of two chapters, while I cross the water on an excursion very necessary to this narrative.

#### CHAPTER X. BEGINS AN IDYLL.

IN the department of the Bouches du Rhône, and in the neighbourhood of Avignon, there are few prettier villages than Marouille-le-Gency, in the *sous-préfecture* of Nougat.

There are not ten houses of more than one story, and not above a hundred cottages; but they are all pretty. They are built, mostly of stone, or of sunburnt bricks whitened over, and roofed in with those convex tiles, laid on loose, and secured only by pegs, such as you see in Italian villages. White as are their fronts, they

were half-hidden by clustering vines. A vineyard, itself, is not ordinarily inviting to the sight. In its picturesque aspect it exists only in the imagination of scene-painters, in the engravings of defunct landscape annuals, and in the fancy performances, in oil and water colours, sent every year to exhibitions. For real beauty, I will match a Kentish hop garden, or a Twickenham orchard, against the most luxuriant vineyard in the sunny south. We say little about the south being chronically stormy as well as sunny. It is only on the banks of the Rhine, where the grapes grow in terraces, one above the other, to the very tops of the hills, that a wine-bearing district assumes a romantic look. It is the same with olive-trees. Olives in their saline solution, popularly, but erroneously, supposed to be sea-water, are very nice to eat with your claret, and very nice to talk or sing about in ballad poetry; but a plantation of olive-trees is, next to a field of mangold-wurzel, about the ugliest object in nature you can come across. Hemp beats it. Flax beats it. Clover demolishes it utterly, in an artistic sense. The vines, however, that cluster beneath the cottage roof, and the olives that grow in the front garden, are certainly charming; and Marouille-le-Gency had an abundance of both.

The little river Bave, one of the tributaries of the Rhône, ran right across the village street, and the villagers were great people for clean linen. They were even given to washing themselves as well as their clothes: a strange thing in the south. The village was girt about with real orange-groves. There was an abundance of myrtles. The entrance to the hamlet was planted with gigantic plants of the cactus tribe. The rarest and most beautiful flowers grew nearly all the year in the open air. Turtle-doves cooed from the tiles. Thickets of the maritime stone pine covered the hills behind Marouille, over which frowned the grey mediæval Château of Ocques, once a baronial residence, then a fortress, then a barrack, now a penitentiary.

The "correctionnaires," or inmates of this house of penance, did not trouble the inhabitants much. They were kept with commendable stringency behind the strong stone walls of the Castle of Ocques, where they worked for their sins at sailcloth weaving, rope-making, and mat-plaiting. Once in six months or so, one of their number escaped; but Marouille-le-Gency had a breed of strong savage dogs, and, a substantial reward being offered for the capture of fugitives, the refugee was soon hunted down. The house of correction was principally useful to the villagers as a bugbear, or *bête noire*, to scare their refractory children withal, who, when they did not behave themselves, were threatened with being sent *là-haut*, up there, to the big old castle.

The inhabitants were mostly small proprietors, each cultivating his own particular patch of vineyard or olive garden, and contriving to make both ends meet, in a scrambling kind of manner, at the end of the year. The necessities of life

were cheap. Bread was coarse, but plentiful. Meat was seldom eaten, but as seldom asked for. Beyond a few river trout and some salt fish in Lent, there was no consumption of piscine delicacies. Oranges and grapes cost nothing at all. The country wine cost only four sous the litre, and for luxuries the denizens of Marouille-le-Gency had a profound disregard.

They did not occupy themselves much with contemporary politics. Theoretically they were legitimists, and kept as a fête the anniversary of the grand day A.D. 1815, when Monseigneur Louis Antoine, Fils de France and Duke of Angoulême, had passed through Marouille-le-Gency on his way to unfurl the white flag at Bordeaux. By the same token, their usual mild natures had undergone an eclipse of ferocity, and they mobbed and nearly murdered Napoleon on his way to Elba after his first abdication at Fontainebleau. The ex-imperial carriage halted to change horses at the village posthouse; the moody occupant was recognised, hooted, insulted, stoned; knives were brandished at the windows; inflamed faces with fiery eyes glared in upon him; and, but for the presence of mind of the mayor, who was known to be a Bourbonist, and who, baring his breast, stood at the coach door pointing to his breast, and crying, "He is a tyrant, but you shall kill me first!" they would have dragged the fallen hero from his vehicle and flung him under the wheels. It is said that Napoleon shed tears of rage and shame at this unmannerly reception, and that as soon as he was clear of Marouille he changed clothes with one of his postilions, and in jack-boots, a red waist-coat, and a hat flaunting with ribbons, clacked his whip, and bestrode the leader, in order to avoid similar insults at the next stage. It must be admitted that, although inveterate against him in adversity, the Marouillais had never fawned upon him in his prosperity. They had invariably detested his rule. The mothers and sweethearts of Marouille cursed him consistently and continually. The flower of their youth had been taken away from their vineyards to shed their blood in his incessant battles.

Nevertheless, for years after 1821, they obstinately refused to believe at Marouille in Napoleon's death, holding that he was still secured by the English with a strong chain riveted to the wall of a dungeon in the island of St. Helena; and as a "bogy" for naughty children he divided popularity with the Château d'Ocques. *Da capo*. For the rest they were very pious, and the most docile of parishioners to their curé, believing implicitly in relics, the genuineness of modern miracles, and the direct intervention of the saints in curing the diseases of cattle, and in assisting the cultivation of the vine. Spells, incantations, second sight, and the evil eye, were in high repute among the Marouillais.

In the year 1825, Charles the Tenth being king of France and Navarre, there came to live at Marouille-le-Gency, as landlord of its solitary

auberge and posthouse—a long low tenement, by the sign of The Lilies of France—a young Swiss called Jean Baptiste Constant.

He had been, according to his own account, in domestic service, and had saved some money. There was no mystery about him. His appearance harmonised with the signalement on his passport, and his papers were perfectly en règle. He had bought the good-will of the Lilies of France out of a notary's étude at Avignon, where it had been deposited for sale by the executors of Madame the Widow Barrichon, who had been its hostess ever since the days of the Great Revolution. Carrier had once set up a guillotine in her back yard, and decapitated half a score of "arestos" there. The villagers declared that, ever since that hideous day, the water of the well in the back yard had worn a purple tinge. The in-coming tenant of the auberge had paid a handsome price for it—twenty-five thousand francs, so the gossips of the village said—half down and half at mortgage on the security of the premises. A man who could command such an amount of capital was looked upon as a personage, and the villagers determined to be very civil to him. The mayor called on him the day after his arrival at Marouille. M. le Curé set him down as one of the future corporation of the fatigune. Fortunately for his peace of mind at Marouille, he was, although a Swiss, a Catholic, hailing from some canton on the Italian frontier. This was fortunate, because the Marouillais dislike heretics, classing them with gipsies, poachers, and escaped correctionnaires. He was, likewise, a bachelor, of about twenty-eight apparently, and, although somewhat swarthy and down-looking, athletic, vivacious, and, on the whole, a very personable fellow. He brought neither kith nor kin with him to his new abiding-place, and the mothers of the village who had marriageable daughters looked upon him favourably from a matrimonial point of view.

He was a good man of business, and looked keenly after the main chance; but he was no niggard. He was willing to be treated, but could treat, too, in his turn, upon occasion. He soon drove a very prosperous trade at the Lilies of France, and, being postmaster, made a good deal out of the rich English travellers on their way to Nice. He engaged as housekeeper, a strong old woman called La Beugleuse. She was not handsome, and far from amiable, and had a desperate potency of harsh lungs, whence her name; but she was very strong, and had a mania for hard work. She kept the stable-boys and postilions sober, and up to their duties, and she looked after the lodgers while Constant served in the bar or waited on the customers in the billiard-room. Moreover, she brought a pair of hands with her in addition to her own. These supplementary hands belonged to her niece, Valérie, who, in 1825, was a slut of a girl not more than fifteen years of age. She was an overgrown loutish kind of a lass, and yet, for all her long limbs, seemed dwarfed and stunted about the head and shoulders. Her skin

was coarse; her hands were tanned with hard labour; her voice was harsh and strident, her manners were uncouth and boorish. She had magnificent brown hair, which hung about her head and neck in a tangled mass, and she had big blue eyes, at which few people cared to look admiringly, seeing that they were enshrined in a sunburnt, dirty face. She was an incorrigible slattern, and her temper was abominable. Children are rarely beaten in France; it is looked upon as a cruel and dastardly thing even to box a girl's ears; but no one blamed La Beugleuse when she thrashed her refractory niece with a knotted rope or a leathern trace, or tied her up to one of the mangers in the stable. It seemed natural that Vaurien-Valérie should be treated like a stubborn horse or mule. She was held up as a warning and example to the insubordinate juveniles of the village. "If you don't mind what's said to you, and give way to your temper, you will come to be flogged and tied up in a stable, like Valérie à la Beugleuse." Nobody cared to inquire what her patronymic was, so they gave her a share of her aunt's nickname.

Perhaps the education she had received was not very conducive to the development of feminine character, or the cultivation of delicate manners. Her mother had died in bearing her. Her father had run away from his employment as a postilion, after drawing a bad number in the conscription, and had then sold himself as a substitute in the army. It was in 1815, when the Emperor was desperately in need of men, and pressing questions were not asked. The substitute was three times promoted, through sheer desperate valour in the field of battle, to the rank of sergeant; and was as many times reduced to the ranks for flagrant misconduct. He didn't drink, he didn't gamble; he was honest, but incurably insubordinate. Fortunately for the glory of France, and the interests of society, Valérie's father got himself killed at the battle of Waterloo, where he was found by a party of Prussian foragers under a heap of slain, riddled with lance wounds, and his arms firmly locked round those of an English dragoon, whom he had dragged off his horse, and killed by tearing his throat in sunder with his teeth.

La Beugleuse took care, after a fashion, of the little orphan Valérie, who in her cradle bawled more than fifty ordinary babies. La Beugleuse was miserably poor. She earned her daily bread by working in the fields as a day labourer. When Valérie was old enough—that is to say, when she was seven—she too went into the fields, to scare the birds away. La Beugleuse sent her to the village school, but she would learn nothing there. They put her on the fool's cap, or bonnet d'âne; they made her kneel across sharp rulers, but in vain. Frequently she played truant, and remained away, among the thickets on the hill, for days together. The curé preached against her in church, for she declined to be catechised, and was the only black sheep among the snowy little flock whom he prepared for

their first communion. When she was ten, she might have earned ten sous a day by picking up stones in the vineyards; but she destroyed more vines than she picked up stones. The curé advised La Beugleuse to send her to Avignon, to a convent, where the good sisters received such undisciplined colts as she, and broke them in with mingled kindness and severity; but Valérie coolly announced her determination of setting fire to the convent and murdering one of the sisters in consecration of the first night she passed under a monastic roof. She was now between thirteen and fourteen, and at about this time Jean Baptiste Constant came to Marouille and entered into possession of the Lilies of France. La Beugleuse took service with him, and Valérie accompanied her. The vaurien soon grew familiar with the stable, and on most friendly terms with the horses and mules, would ride them bare-backed to water, would litter and rub them down, and feed them, and; indeed, was in a short time quite as useful as an ostler. Partly from compassion, and partly from an idea that the girl could be overcome by other means than violence, Jean Baptiste persuaded the house-keeper to abandon her formerly unvaried specific of flogging. For a time the girl went on worse, and was intolerably riotous and rebellious; but, after a while, she came to show, towards Jean Baptiste at least, a strange surly docility which seemed to be in some degree due to affection, and to some extent to fear. She came at his call, and almost at his whistle, like a dog. She obeyed all his orders without a murmur. A stern word or a stern look from Jean Baptiste was sufficient to render her meek and submissive whenever she showed a disposition to defy her aunt. The mayor, M. le Curé, all the villagers, marvelled at the phenomenon. Valérie was wholly changed.

But a stranger-phenomenon was soon to take place. When the girl came to be sixteen she grew with astounding rapidity exceedingly beautiful. Like Peau d'âne in the fairy tale, she seemed, all at once, to have changed from a grubby little ragamuffin, a sordid beggar's brat, into a lovely and elegant princess. A princess in rags she might have remained, certainly; but that the landlord of the Lilies of France brought her back, after one of his visits to Avignon, enough cotton print of Rouen manufacture for two work-a-day frocks, and a piece of mingled silk and wool for a Sunday dress. Valérie, who had hitherto been mocked at and despised, as the lowest of the low, was now envied. She went through her long-deferred first communion with unexceptionable decorum. She combed out her tangled brown hair, and arranged it in sumptuous plaits beneath a natty little lace cap. She washed her face, and her big blue eyes shone out from the cleared surface, like stars. A film seemed to have been removed from her voice, even as a cataract is removed by a skilful operator from a diseased eye. The voice was harsh and strident no longer, but full of deep rich tones, and low whispers. When she was in

a passion now, she was sublime, not repulsive. The angular movements of her limbs were replaced by an indescribable suppleness and grace. She began to dance without ever having learnt. She began to sing without ever having been taught. She was evidently one of those raw creatures who "pick up" accomplishments, or are gifted with them naturally. Her capacity had flowered late, but the product was marvellous in exuberant beauty.

Her curious obedience to the behests of Jean Baptiste Constant endured during a transitory period. When her beauty was definitively manifest, the shackles, as well as the dirt and the coarseness, and the clumsiness, fell from her limbs. The slave became a tyrant. She turned sharply round on the strong old woman who used to flog her, and in a moment, morally, trampled her aunt under her heel. La Beugleuse was dazed and bewildered by this radiant serpent, so suddenly emergent from a scaly skin. She gave in at once, and became Valérie's very humble and obedient servant. Her master, Jean Baptiste, held out a little longer, and once or twice essayed to scold the girl; but she soon determined the relations that were in future to exist between them. "There is only one person who shall say in this house I WILL, and that person is myself." Thus she said, stamping her foot. The innkeeper bit his lips, and, looking at her curiously from under his drooping eyelids, said "I will" no more—so far at least as she was concerned—at the Lilies of France.

#### AMATEUR TOUTING.

It is a grave question whether the effect of all touting is not rather to set you against the thing for which your favourable consideration is solicited, than to draw you towards it. When a couple of shy provincial maidens plant themselves in front of a bonnet-shop in Cranbourne-street, and commence a discussion as to the attainableness or unattainableness of this or that head-dress, they are surely much more likely to be driven away from the shop than attracted into it by the touter, who suddenly appears from within the building, and entreats them to enter. It is so again with the photographic business. The undecided people who get in front of a frame of photographic portraits in the street, wanting to have a good look at them before they determine whether this particular establishment is to be patronised or not—how are these poor souls tormented by the nondescript character who touts for the vampire within! If this dreadful individual does not frighten away these almost-customers by flourishing the horrid little portraits, at one shilling each, before their eyes, and otherwise boring and confusing them, they must be made of tough material indeed.

Touting is a mistake, and a troublesome mistake. The hotel and lodging-house touts, who surround you when you arrive at a popular

watering-place, always set you against the establishments they represent. The fly-men, who are so obliging as to accompany you down the pier at Ryde, putting in a remark every now and then as to the excellency of their vehicles and the vigour of their horses; the cabman, who keeps along by the kerb-stone soliciting your attention every moment with the handle of his whip; the young man who inquires whether you will take a bottle of the renovating hair-wash, or a pot of the Andalusian cream, when you simply want your hair cut; all these touts, and many more of the same class, play the very deuce with the interests of the concern they endeavour to serve.

But all this is professional touting. We have now to do with amateur touters: persons who, with nothing to gain by it, are continually cramming those whose interests they gratuitously serve, down the reluctant throats of their friends.

The recommending of clergymen is one of the commonest forms of touting. You sit under a certain preacher, and have sat under him for years, deriving a vast deal of edification. But this does not satisfy you. There is room in your pew for Somebody Else, and you are always trying to get Somebody Else to come and sit there. Occasionally you succeed, but somehow it happens that this Somebody Else is never satisfied, and leaves the sacred edifice in a critical, not to say vituperative, frame of mind. Sometimes Somebody Else begins at once:—"Well, I must say that, after all you said, and all you had prepared me to expect, I am a little bit disappointed." Choking with indignation, you inquire with enforced calmness, "Why Somebody Else is displeased; what was the matter with the sermon?" "Oh, there was nothing the matter—far from it—it was all sound enough, but then it was so very common-place."

Or, there is another kind of Somebody Else who will maintain a profound and aggravating silence as you walk away from church, until at last you are forced, as it were, to learn the worst, and break out with the momentous question:—"Well, what did you think of it?" "Oh," answers your friend, quietly, "I've nothing to say against the sermon, except that it wasn't Christianity." "What! Not Christianity?" "No, certainly not. As the discourse of a heathen philosopher to his disciples, it would have been excellent, but coming from the mouth of an ordained clergyman, in a Christian church, it was almost shocking." In this case Somebody Else is what is called strictly Evangelical, and so is your favourite preacher: only it wonderfully happens that on this particular occasion, as he is addressing people who are supposed to be already Christians, he does not go back to expound the first principles of their creed to them, but ventures to touch for a short time on the kind of life which it behoves them, being Christians already, to lead.

Or suppose, on the other hand, that the first sermon is a success, and that your friend—

though it is almost too much to suppose—is satisfied. He is resolved to attend this church himself, and takes a pew to accommodate his family. On the very first Sunday that the family attends this new place of worship, the preacher comes out in a new light, your friend's wife avows her belief that he is an Arian at heart, a universalist, a sceptic, a Jesuit in disguise, or a Calvinist. It would be wicked to let the children listen to such doctrines; they might receive impressions which they would never be able to shake off. What could you—the original touter for this disguised Jesuit, Calvinist, sceptic, Arian, universalist, or what not—what could you mean by inducing this orthodox family to attend the ministrations of this enemy to true religion? And so, you get into a scrape. Your friend informs you, on the occasion of your next meeting, that he has been at the expense of hiring a large family-pew in which neither he nor any member of his family will ever set foot again, and that it is all attributable to your influence. The loss of lucre, however, he continues, is in such a case only a very small matter; he only hopes that no member of his domestic circle may have already imbibed dangerous views; his eldest daughter has recently given utterance to certain sentiments of a dangerous description on the subject of play-going; and Tommy has on two occasions over-eaten himself—and no wonder, for it had in the course of one sermon been remarked by the Reverend Mr. Broadhead—whom *you* had spoken so highly of—that good might be, and doubtless *had* been done, by plays, and that the good things of this life were not put in the world to be rejected by the creatures for whose benefit they were intended.

And so, you see, you have not only touted for the Reverend Broadhead in vain, but you have actually brought discredit upon that really excellent man, and you have caused your friend, who had previously had considerable confidence in your opinion, to regard your principles with mistrust and suspicion. So you had better have let it alone.

As to the passion for recommending doctors, it is a psychological phenomenon of the most wonderful sort. It really seems as if people had their own interests and those of their families, very much less at heart than the advancement of their medical man. You happen to mention in the presence of Mrs. Creakingate and her eldest and invalided daughter, that your wife is not quite the thing, is troubled with nervous headache at times, is suffering from neuralgia in the left temple. As you speak, Mrs. and Miss Creakingate look at each other, and exchange a smile of enlightenment, and as soon as you pause in your remarks, they address each other, not you. "Oh, but this is a case for Dr. Flook, if ever there was a case for Dr. Flook!" Or, "My dear Julia, do you hear? Just the very kind of case which Dr. Flook excels in treating. Now, my dear Mr. Spooner, you must promise me that Mrs. Spooner will see Dr. Flook. He is at this moment attending dear

Rachel at home, and Julia here will tell you what he did for *her*. I assure you, she's not like the same creature. Now, you will send for Dr. Flook, won't you? or, stay, I shall see Dr. Flook to-day—this very afternoon—and I will send him on to you; yes, that will be the best way!"

Or it may be that you yourself are the Doctor's partisan. Your friend, Mr. Pukey, has, in an evil hour for himself, mentioned to you that his digestion is not what he could wish; that he can't digest the commonest, simplest things; that the other day he dined with old Yellowgills quite alone—bit of salmon, lobster sauce, nice cool cucumber, Irish stew, roast pork (with some remarkably good stuffing), and a duck to wind up with—no, by-the-by, there was some dressed crab for a finish. Well; Pukey assures you that he passed the most dreadful night possible, after partaking of this simple meal; as to the wine, it couldn't have been that, because he confined himself entirely to two kinds, sparkling Moselle and claret. What was the meaning of his digestion being disturbed after an entertainment so rational and wholesome, Pukey begs to know? "I'll tell you what's the meaning of it!" you reply, with profundity. "The meaning of it, is, your liver's affected. I've no more doubt of it than that I'm standing here. Now, you take my advice and see Bacon. Bacon is the only man now-a-days who can touch the liver. It's a well-known fact; all his brother practitioners admit it; and directly a bad case of liver is brought before them, their first remark is: 'I should like to meet Bacon about this case; Bacon knows more about the liver than any man in the profession. In fact, he's been mixed up with it, all his life!'"

In both these cases, failure is the issue of all this disinterested touting. Mr. and Mrs. Spooner had got on very well under the care of their usual attendant, Dr. Pilkington; while Dr. Flook, who is at last really forced upon them by the enthusiastic Mrs. Creakingate, does not suit the worthy couple at all. Flook's first proceeding frightens them out of their wits; his first visit is his last; and Mrs. Creakingate is so much offended that a coolness is gradually established between the families, the temperature of which coolness declines and declines until at last it ends in a permanent hard frost, thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit. And besides all this, Dr. Pilkington is so hurt at being superseded by Flook, that he declines ever to enter the abode of the Spooners again. If the Spooners had not about this time found out Dr. Bacon, *for themselves*, it is impossible to say what would have become of them.

And yet, after this painful experience, here is Spooner himself, recommending his friend Pukey to consult Dr. Bacon about his liver. And what is the consequence? The next time Pukey and Spooner meet, the former is in a state of the most violent indignation compatible with the feebleness of his frame. "How could you send that man to me?" he asks. "He has nearly killed me. The man must be a

horse-doctor, surely. I declare to you that, for a whole week, I have been lying in a condition between life and death, in consequence of the awful violence of the drugs which the inhuman wretch administered to me. Even now, I believe it will be months before I am able to get up my strength again." The unhappy Pukey has a transparent look which almost deprives Spooner of the power of defending his medical favourite; still he makes the attempt. "But, perhaps, this may be part of the right treatment of the case, and as you advance further—" "Advance further!" cries P.: "you need not trouble yourself about that. Dr. Bacon has received his congé, and will never enter my house again, I promise you." "Ah, you haven't given him a fair trial," says Spooner. And so here is another coolness established, and all through this pernicious touting on the part of private friends.

"Now just 'ave the goodness to look at this, will you," says a certain friend of yours: to whom, as possessed of immense wealth, you have introduced a young painter-friend who paints portraits. "Did you ever see such a thing?" continues your moneyed friend, exhibiting his likeness as completed and sent home by your protégé. "I don't set up for being handsome, but I will say, that when I look in my glass of a morning, it does tell me a pleasanter tale than that. And it's vulgar, too, mind you, that's what I feel most. It's vulgar and staring, and brazen, and not the gentleman. The very clothes don't seem to fit—and I go to Poole, mind you, and pay him, too, which is more than every West-ender can say. He might have done the clothes right, at any rate."

What are you to say to this? The portrait is there before you, an utter failure. Your young friend the painter is one of those practitioners who may be said to have a fine eye for the Ugly. He does the thing before him, but the ugliest version of the thing. Every defect in the original is sought out and dwelt upon with intense relish. And you knew all this. But then he's such a good fellow, and doesn't get on particularly well, and you used to know his father:—all excellent reasons why your friend should be let in for a bad portrait. "I'll pay for it, mind you," says Civis as he takes leave of you, "but I'll never hang it up, nor show it to anybody."

As the worthy Civis has imparted this last intention a day or two before, to the man of genius himself, this last is not much better pleased with his sitter than his sitter is with him. "Of course it was very kind of you," says young Titian, "to recommend me and get me the job and that sort of thing, but upon my word that friend of yours is the most insufferable purse-proud snob I ever had any transaction with in the whole course of my life. Let me have a gentleman to deal with, and I don't care; but a tradesman—a man from the wrong side of Temple Bar—they're all alike! They would lord it over Michael Angelo if they had the chance."

So here is another instance of the failure of amateur touting. It is by no means the last that might be quoted. What do you do when your friend complains of his corns, and of the wonderful ideas entertained by shoemakers as to the form and size of the human foot? You instantly begin to chuckle, "Aha, my boy, you should go to *my* bootmaker, you'd never be troubled with corns any more. Go to *my* man, and be at peace." What follows? Your friend comes limping up to you a week or two afterwards, and informs you that, according to the verdict of an eminent chiropodist, he is likely to be lame for six months in consequence of an attempt to wear the shoes supplied by your shoemaker. And your shoemaker thanks you with the air of a martyr for having sent him a customer, but regrets that the gentleman has not behaved very handsome, sending back the shoes and declining to pay for them. "A pair of shoes, too," remarks the injured tradesman, exhibiting the articles in question, which resemble canoes, "a pair of shoes as ain't everybody's money, being made according to the gentleman's own design, with no shape in them."

But there is another form of amateur touting which must have a passing word of notice before the subject is dismissed. This time, it is your private friends whom you boast about, and you seek to cram them—as you did professional men and tradesmen—down the throats of your acquaintance. It is dangerous work.

Did you ever try to bring two people acquainted—being rather proud of each of them—and attain a successful result? Particular attention is requested to the wording of this question. It is not asked whether you succeeded in bringing those two persons to know each other, though that is often a performance with difficulties beset, but whether the result of the introductory ceremony was ever satisfactory.

I have said that you are rather proud of each of these friends separately. You think highly of them morally, intellectually, socially. You have spoken of each to the other as a fine fellow, one of the cleverest men you know, a man you have a sincere regard for. You have said that they will just suit each other, that they were made to be acquainted. In speaking of Arker to Booms, you have said that Arker is one of the most amusing fellows you ever knew, that there is a fund of dry humour about the man, that he is excellent company, a capital fellow to get at your table, a great talker, and never at a loss. In like manner, when you describe Booms to Arker, you are equally eloquent about the good qualities of Booms, which, however, are of a different sort. You say that Booms is a man of solid information, a deeply read fellow, a walking encyclopædia, "and yet," you add, "no man has a keener appreciation of a good thing than Booms, and then, my dear Arker, you and he do really think so very much alike on so many subjects, that I am continually reminded of each of you when I am with the other."

Now what have you done? In one word, you have simply set these two excellent individuals

one against the other more completely than if you had abused Arker to Booms in the most ferocious manner, and set Booms before Arker as a monster in human form. I don't know how it is; I don't attempt to explain the phenomenon, but it is an unquestionable fact that we don't like to hear people whom we don't know, made a fuss about, and that we very soon weary of hearing Aristides—when he is not numbered among our acquaintances—called the just.

And now let us suppose that you do at last succeed in bringing about a meeting between Arker and Booms. It is only after innumerable false starts that you do succeed in this. Many times have you got together the very people whom you wanted to assist at the great introduction scene, but then unhappily either Arker or Booms would not come, and still this meeting which you have sought with feverish anxiety, to bring about, has not come off. At last, however, we will suppose you successful. Arker and Booms are both disengaged and will come. But, now your difficulties with regard to the other guests begin. The people who are wanted to fit in with Arker and Booms, the mutual friends, where are they? They are wanting. Some are ill; others out of town; and others engaged; and you are obliged to get all sorts of waifs and strays together and "make up a party," the members of which are all strangers to each other, and, above all, to your two principal guests. Also, on the day of your dinner-party, the wind is in the east. Arker has been engaged in a troublesome affair in the City, which is likely to involve him in loss, and Booms has the toothache. Your difficulties begin, before you leave the drawing-room. Arker has got it into his head that he is to take your wife down to dinner, and, after offering his arm, has to be disabused of his opinion, and to yield the palm to Booms, for whom the honour of conducting the lady of the house has been reserved.

And now, once seated at table, you hope that matters will begin to prosper a little. There is one subject on which you remember—and it is the only one—that your two illustrious friends hold strong opinions of a diametrically opposite nature. That subject is instantly started by Chipper: a little stop-gap whom you invited to fill a vacant seat. The subject is started, and out comes Booms with sentiments of the most uproarious kind, couched in the most uncompromising terms. You are in agonies—you listen with a feeble watchful smile—you don't hear what your next neighbour is saying to you, for you know that Arker cannot keep silence on this particular question of church-rates, and—to do him justice—he doesn't. After this, all goes wrong. Booms, your man of information, your walking encyclopædia, is at fault on the Schleswig-Holstein business, and Arker, your amusing man, your dry humorist, "so invaluable at a dinner-table," has a silent fit upon him, and, after contradicting Booms flatly about the church-rates, collapses altogether, and won't open his lips. When the party is over, your wife informs you that Mrs. Arker and Mrs. Booms were not

successful in pleasing each other in the drawing-room; and, in short, that it is a flat failure.

Or, it may be, that your efforts to bring Arker and Booms together, are productive of a result still more startling. This dear object of your heart, the union of these good people, is successfully brought about. They meet at your house, they take to each other. They exchange calls. Meetings are arranged, and parties made up, in which you are, at first, of course, included. At first—but not at last. For lo and behold! a day comes when the Arkers and the Boomses find their friendship is strong enough to stand alone, and no longer demand your fostering care, and at length the meetings and the junketings come off without your being present, and then it begins to be dimly borne in upon you that the Arkers have cut you out with the Boomses, or that the Boomses have cut you out with the Arkers, and that you have only your own delirious anxiety to make these people acquainted with each other, to thank for it.

And what is the upshot of all this? Are you never to recommend anybody under any circumstances, never to try to do a good turn to a friend who wants a little pushing, never to bring any of your neighbours, who are strangers to each other, together? These—cries the reader—are the principles of a cynic, a curmudgeon, a churl. They are and must be taken, like everything else, in moderation.

Extravagant pushing and touting, which are ordinarily thought to indicate friendly feeling and good nature, indicate sometimes one or two other things of a less noble nature. Very often there is something of egotism and vanity at the bottom of all this violent partizanship. *We* have taken up such and such a doctor, such and such an artist, and because *we* have done so, he must be pushed, though half our friends be poisoned, and the other half handed down to posterity as so many scarecrows. So and so, again, is *our* friend, therefore he must be worshipped. What! are we not discerning and clever beyond other men? If we have taken up these people, shall not others follow us? Then we most of us like popularity; and the approval and belief, even of our shoemakers and tailors, and their conviction that we have a large circle of affluent friends, is something worth trying for.

Nor must we forget that our amateur touting often brings harm instead of good on the person touted for. Wherever our poor friend Pukey goes, he denounces Bacon as the most ignorant and pretentious of all medical practitioners. Our friend, dissatisfied with that portrait which he has paid for, but which he cannot hang up—is he likely to sing the praises of Pigment, or will he not rather warn his friends against him, and that in the strongest phraseology?

Perhaps the safest rule to be observed in recommending, is, to wait till you are asked; or, at any rate, to behave—as has not been the case in any of the supposititious instances given above—with modesty and temperance. “Dr. Flook has done *me* a great deal of good: for so much I can vouch; Mr. Pigment has made a

most excellent likeness of my wife; Gripper’s shoes fit *me* with extraordinary comfort:” these are statements which you may make with great security—nay, to make them is probably one of the duties which you owe to that alarming Institution, Society.

### ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

So Earl Russell called it in my passport—travelling “on the public service,” nothing definite, nothing more. I had my instructions, of course, but they were, as they will remain, private. I had no uniform, like a courier, no sheepskin bag of documents, no despatch-box, nothing distinctive and immediately recognisable, like a Queen’s messenger. On the public service I was to travel as one of the public, quietly making such inquiries as had been suggested to me, and quietly noting down the replies; but I was in no wise to give clue to my business, was not to produce my passport until it was asked for, and was to enter into no particulars as to the public service on which I was accredited. I had one consolation—that I afforded subject for an enormous amount of jesting on the part of those friends who knew that my mission lay in Hamburg, at that time the head-quarters of the German army marching on to Schleswig-Holstein. It was a part of the admirable humour of those wags to assume a belief in the premature closing of my earthly career, to take long-living lingering farewells of me under the assumption that I should be taken for a spy, and either shot on the spot, after a drum-head court-martial, or immured for life in a Prussian fortress. I was christened “Major André.” I was begged to read an account of the captivity at Verdun. One would gravely affirm that he had heard hanging was not really painful; another would advise me not to submit to the degradation of a handkerchief over my eyes, but to glare defiantly at the shooting-party; a third hoped I had a strong pocket-knife, because “people always bought those queer little things that the prisoners carved out of wood.” I bore their sallies like a hero, and started by the night mail to Dover “on the public service.”

Although the South-Eastern Railway has done its best to whirl me to that never-somnolent town, and although the Belgian mail-packet, advantaged by a splendid night, a favouring breeze, and a placid sea, has conveyed me thence to Ostend in very little more than four hours, I find, on disembarking at half-past three A.M., that our haste has been in vain, for the train does not start until after seven, and I have nearly four hours to get through. I am not prepared to say at what town in Europe I should prefer spending these four hours on a winter’s night, but I am prepared to declare that certainly Ostend should not have my suffrages. Had it been summer I could have had some supper at one of the numerous quay-side restaurants, and then strolled round the town; or I could have walked on the Digue, or examined the

Phare, or bathed in the sea; but in January the quay-side restaurants are shut, and none of the other diversions are tempting. Nothing suggests itself but bed; so, mindful of old recollections, I determine to go to the *Hôtel d'Allemagne*, and, waving off touters, who, even at this dead hour of the night and season of the year, are vociferously to the fore, I stow myself into a one-horse omnibus, and mention my intended destination. The conductor of this omnibus suggests to me a reconsideration of my determination. That he should say anything against the *Hôtel d'Allemagne*, far be it! But he knows a better; one which, if he may use an English word, is *bien comfortablement*, one which is close at hand, and where *mademoiselle* (the other occupant of the omnibus) is about to descend. Will I not? No, I won't! the *Hôtel d'Allemagne* or nothing, and I pity *mademoiselle*, who descends at a not very attractive-looking *porte cochère*, as I think of Raymond and Agnes, and Mr. Wilkie Collins's Terribly Strange Bed, and many other unpleasant nights. But arriving at the *Hôtel d'Allemagne*, we find it fast closed, and all ringing and shouting are powerless to wake the inhabitants, so, much humiliated and crestfallen, I give in, and allow myself to be reconveyed to the *bien comfortablement*.

It is warm at the *bien comfortablement*, which is a great point on a bitter night; the stove is alight, the moderator-lamp shines brightly on the snowy tablecloth, and *mademoiselle*, who was deposited by the omnibus on its first journey, and who turns out to be a "young person in service," is talking uninspired English to a big man, who came over in the fore-part of the steamer, and who is drinking hot brandy-and-water at a great rate. My hoarse friend, who has given up the omnibus, here puts in a spectral appearance at the door, and beseeches me to go to bed, promising to call me in the morning; so, dazed and tired, to bed I go, and as I creep between the coarse sheets, and rebound on the spring mattress, and see the foreign furniture, and smell the foreign smell, and vainly endeavour to cover myself with the foreign bed-clothes, I bethink me of the time when I was a tall slip of a boy, eighteen years ago, and when, on my way to a German university, I passed my first night in foreign parts in this same city of Ostend. And so, lulled partly by these reflections, partly by the monotonous crooning of the voices of the young person in service, and the brandy-drinker in the next room, I fall asleep.

"*Sieu! sieu! cinq heures et d'mi, m'sieu.*" That recalled me to my senses, and I damped myself with the napkin, and placed as much of my nose and chin as it would contain into the pie-dish, and dressed myself, and arrived in the salon just as the breakfast I had ordered before I went to bed, was brought in by the waiter.

Princes, fools, and Englishmen, travel in the first-class carriages, says the German proverb: I know I am not a prince, but I am an Englishman, therefore one need not enter upon the other question, I think, as I take my first-class

ticket. I am travelling "on the public service" now, so I ride in the first-class; on previous occasions I have ridden in the fourth-class, with fishwomen carrying strong-smelling baskets of Ostend produce, into the inland regions, and blue-bloused peasants in large-peaked caps, with all of whom I have held converse in the Flemish language—which I did not understand, but in which I made excellent progress by speaking a mixture of English and German with a Dutch accent. Now I sit in the first-class. I am certain there are no other Englishmen in the train, and I suppose there are no princes, and no fools, at such an early hour, for I am solitary and silent. On past Jabbeke and Bloemendael, jolly little neighbouring villages; on, through the flat well-cultivated Belgian country; on, past those dreary old châteaux, with the gabled roofs, standing far back, and looking so grim and desolate; on, past the white-faced little towns, through the high street of which our train tears, giving us passing glimpses of close-capped children screaming at the wooden bar which prevents them from hurling themselves on the line; on, until with a whistle and a shriek, we dash into Ghent, and pull up steaming beside the platform. Only one change at the Ghent station—no Englishman; no bundle of railway rugs, umbrella and sticks, waterproof coat, camp-stool, and red-faced Murray, shining like a star in the midst of them; no bowing commissionaire conducting milor to his carriage; priests in big shovel-hats, fat-faced Flemish maidens; Ghent burghers, looking particularly unlike one's idea of Philip van Artavelde; porters, idlers, everything as usual, except the English travellers. So at Malines, where, as usual, we stop for half an hour's refreshment, I perceive the lack of English travellers; the *buvette*, where assemble the choice spirits of the third and fourth classes, is filled with roysterers drinking that mahogany-coloured beer with a white woolly froth, which is at once so nasty and so reminiscent of a pantomime beverage; but the first-class restaurant (so red-velvety, so gilded and looking-glassed, and artificial-flowered, and marble-tabled) has only three visitors: a Belgian officer in a grey overcoat, bright blue trousers and gilt spurs: a fat German, perpetually wetting the point of the pencil with which he is making notes: and myself. So, throughout the journey.

Passing Liège, the sun burst out, and the deep red cuttings, and the foaming waterfalls, and babbling rivulets, and bright green growth of what Thomas Hood aptly called the "lovely environs" of that grim smoke-begrimed city, glowed in his rays. Indeed, the weather continued so bright and genial that when we ran into Cologne, at half-past four, I could scarcely believe it was mid-winter. But when I stood, portmanteau in hand, at the railway station, I soon realised the fact! In the touring season the yard is filled with cabs and omnibuses; now, there are three wretched *droshkies*, driverless and badly horsed; then, you have to fight your way through a shrieking crowd of touters, eager

to bear you off to see the Dom, the shrine of the three kings, and the bones of St. Ursula's twelve thousand virgins; now, a solitary man, hinting at no sight to be seen, offers to carry my baggage to an inn. But I leave my traps at the station, and having two hours to pass before the starting of the train, I walk through the town, and find it indeed deserted. The big Rhine-bordering hotels are closed, half the Jean Marie Farinas have shut up their Eau-de-Cologne shops, while the other two hundred and fifty seem thoroughly unexpectant of custom: the Wechsel Comptoir (or money changers), whose ideas as to the current value of a sovereign are very vacillating, now have closed their shutters, and the itinerant photograph-sellers have fled. So I skulk back to the station, and there get a portion of a tough hare, and some red cabbage, and some kraut and potato salad, drink a bottle of Rudesheimer, and throw myself into the train and prepare for a night's rest.

I get it, with the exception of three rapid exits for refreshment purposes, at Minden, Hanover, and Lehrte. I sleep steadily on until half-past seven A.M., when we arrive at Harburg, our terminal station. Hamburg lies on the other side of the Elbe, and the passage of the river is made in summer by a steam-boat, but now the Elbe is frozen, and the crossing is long and difficult. As I am getting my portmanteau, I see a good-looking fresh-coloured boy in a huge fur cap standing, on the box of a droschky in the court-yard; he motions to me inquiringly, I respond, and next minute he has rushed up, has collared my portmanteau, has pushed me into his carriage, and is standing upon the box, whooshing and hollowing to his two mettlesome little steeds. Besides his fur cap, he wears a short sheepskin jacket, with the collar turned up round his face, thick breeches, and well-greased boots reaching to his knees. He has a large pair of fur gloves too, and a long whip, and a short cigar, and a great flow of animal spirits, which impels him jocosely to lay the whip across everybody he meets: shivering peasants with yokes carrying red pails, solemn douaniers, pompous post-couriers, sturdy farmers, fat burghers, all with their heads buried in their coat collars. In five minutes we arrive at the banks of the Elbe, where we have to wait a quarter of an hour until the steam-ferry is ready to receive us. The scene is desolate enough; the ice has begun to break up, but as yet has "given" but little; a bitter north-east wind skins the thin bald dreary landscape, flat and treeless; and the horses attached to the various carriages shiver and rattle their harness. The peasants have put off their yokes, and stamp up and down beside their red pails, the douaniers scowl over their pipes through the windows of the little toll-house, the post-courier slips on the frozen road and falls headlong, coming up again with a comic expression of ruffled dignity and a mouth full of strange oaths, and nobody seems happy save my fur-capped droschky boy, who, by dodging and whipping, has edged his carriage into the foremost rank. Then a shout

announces that the steam-ferry is ready, and with heavy jolts and bumps we rumble on to it, carriages, horsemen, peasants, all closely packed together, with some twenty men in the bows armed with long iron-tipped poles to break up the solid, and push off the floating, ice. Steam is up, the fat little funnel throws out angry snorts, and we are off; but after two minutes come upon a solid mass of ice which defies our charge, and defies, too, all the prods of the pole-bearers: so we have to back and steer into another channel, through which, by dint of pushing off the floating icebergs, and after many weary stoppages, we arrive at the other side. Then down a long, long chaussée, with never-ending poplars on either side, bounded by a broad arm of the Elbe, so thoroughly frozen that we drive bodily over the ice, with no other difficulty, than the uncertain foothold of the horses; then another chaussée, straggling outskirts of a town, wooden bridges over canals, where broad-bottomed boats lay, like the larks and leverets in the pie immortalised by Tennyson, "embedded and enjellied," then through a handsome faubourg, along a broad road skirting an enormous sheet of water and bordered by handsome houses, and then pulled short up by the door of Streit's Hotel.

Very good is Streit, very handsome is his house, and very excellent is his accommodation, although by reason of my becoming tenant of the only disengaged room in the hotel I am mounted up very high, and my chamber has a dreary look-out into a back court-yard or flowerless garden. For Streit is full. At Streit's door I noticed two sentinels on guard, and in Streit's first floor are reposing princes of the land, who are thus guarded, and noble officers, the princes' staff. His Royal Highness of Prussia is chez Streit, and smaller Transparencies are billeted about in other mansions of this noble street, which is called the Jungfernstieg. A very short acquaintance with Streit proves to me that his visitors are principally military; lumbering men with clinking spurs, and huge overcoats, and sweeping moustaches, brush by me in the passages; and I am continually tumbling over the regular soldier-servant, he of the short hair, stiff gait, and ears sticking out on the side of his head, like the handles of a jug. I am disposed to believe that Streit imagines I, too, am military, when he hands me a letter from high authority which has been waiting my arrival, and which bears an enormous seal with the impression of the town arms, and has a strictly official and somewhat military appearance. Streit, I think, recognises the style of the address, but little wots Streit of the contents of this document, which enjoins me to return to England so soon as my necessary rest is accomplished. In his happy ignorance, and doubtless thinking that he has me his customer for days, Streit suggests my being tired and going to bed. But—though I don't confide this to Streit—I have only one day in which to see Hamburg, so I scorn his suggestion, and order breakfast. After a splendid bath—Streit has a very good

bath in his house—I descend, find an oasis of cups and plates in a desert of tablecloth (laid for the table d'hôte breakfast), and start out to explore.

The enormous lake in front of me, is the Alster Bassin, and no doubt, in summer when it is the grand resort of the Hamburgers, who, making up pleasant parties, float over its waters in painted boats, or booze and smoke in pavilion cafés on its banks, it is a delightful place. Now, however, it is one vast sheet of ice, on which the thaw is just beginning to take effect, for in the distance is seen a line of men, half a dozen paces apart, extending from shore to shore, busily engaged in breaking holes in the ice to admit the air, and so tend to its more speedy dissolution. In the comely gardens fringing the lake, I find nurse-girls and their charges, of course attendant soldiers, old gentlemen, evidently bent on "constitutional," priests with bent heads hurrying to the service the bells inviting to which are now resonant, and little children scampering about—not unlike a foreign edition of St. James's Park, barring the ducks. Between the two Alster Bassins, the greater and the less, I cross over a barren strip of land, where there is a lock and a big windmill, brown and skeletony, and reminding one of the background of a sketch by Ostade, and on the other side I find a high road, and on the high road I find two horses, and on the horses I find two Austrian officers coming very much to grief, partly on account of the slippery state of the roads, and partly on account of their not having yet acquired the rudiments of equitation; for I take it that to pull a horse's nose on a level with his eye by the aid of a very sharp curb, and then to kick him in the flank with sharp-rowelled spurs, clutching meanwhile by anything permanent, is not the best way to keep a horse on his legs. Then across the Jungfernstieg into the shop-streets, where there is plate-glass, and gilding, and decoration, and lavish expenditure on every side. To eat, seems the great end of the Hamburger's life—to eat and so to enjoy. Not only are there large hotels, restaurants, conditorei or pastrycooks, and fruiterers in every street, but at every dozen doors you find a board announcing that in the basement, below the level of the pavement, is an oyster-cellar. "Austern und Frühstück," Oysters and Breakfasts, that is the hospitable announcement of the signboard, and there do the fast young merchants congregate before they arrive at their counting-houses, and plunge so deeply into the many-lined, thinly-written, thin rustling leaves of letter paper, all relating to that "first of Exchange." These oyster-cellars are cool yet snug resorts, suggestive of pleasant and soothing alkaline waters, succulent bivalves, appetising anchovies and devilled biscuits; for your Hamburger has anything but poor brains for drinking, and could give your swag-bellied Hollander, and the rest of Cassio's friends, a long start and catch him easily. Likewise, as a new feature, do I notice at the doors of the restaurants, venison: not in its prepared and floured state—as with us—but in its natural

state, skin on, horns, hoofs, severed jugular and all.

High change in Hamburg is at one o'clock. As it is rapidly approaching that hour, I make my way towards the Börse, and enter the building as it is beginning to fill. A handsome edifice this, with a large spiral hall in the centre, surrounded by a colonnade. Up-stairs, all sorts of little rooms, with names on the doors, merchants' offices like our London pattern at Lloyd's, and a big room, empty and locked, which, I am told, is the seat of the Chamber of Commerce. From below comes a roar of voices, and, looking down, I see the Hamburg merchants literally "at it." There they are, Hamburgers proper, rotund of body, heavy of jowl, fishy of eye, stubbly of hair, bushy of beard, thumb-bereinged and hands-begrimed, listening and grunting; young Hamburg, blotchy, sodden, watery-eyed, strongly reminiscent of "last night," stung into business for business' sake, and for the sake of making more money for the encouragement of Veuve Cliquot, and Mumm, and Roederer, and Heidzecker, and other compounders of Silvery Sec and Pommery Greno; old Jewry, gabardined to the heels in fur, with cotton wool in its ears, screaming, yelling, checking off numbers in its interlocutor's face with skinny yellow fingers; young Jewry, with an avalanche of black satin round its throat, and a big brilliant diamond therein, cool, calm, specious, and a trifle oleaginous; middle-aged France, heaving in the waistband which props its rotund stomach under its double-chin, with scarcely any face to be seen between the rim of its fore and aft hat and the points of its gummed moustache; here and there, an Englishman, chimney-pot-hatted, solemn and awfully respectable; little olive-skinned Greeks, Russians in sable, and two Parsees in brown-paper head-dresses. But the noise! It floods you, drenches you, soaks you through and through.

When I leave the Exchange it is past two o'clock, which I am glad of; but it is beginning to rain, which I am sorry for; Streit's table d'hôte does not take place until four, and I must fain walk about, dreading the thoughts of my dreary bedroom looking on the back yard. So I walk about, and look at the church of St. Nicholas, which is one of the best Gothic triumphs of our own great architect, Mr. Gilbert Scott, and I bend my neck very far back indeed endeavouring to see the spire of St. Michael's, and I visit the Rathhaus and am not impressed thereby, and I inspect the promising female beauty, with the same result: for the Hamburg females are neither better nor worse looking than the majority of their German sisters, and have the coarse hair, and the dull thick skins, and the coarse hands, and the elephantine ankles, for which your Deutsches Madchen is renowned. They seem to find favour, though, in the eyes of the Prussian and Austrian officers, who are everywhere, and who ogle them in the true military manner; but the maidens do not respond, and only halt in their walk to contemplate occasional regiments marching by, with the invariable accompaniment of

vagabond boys and men. But the rain now comes down so smartly that I can walk about uncovered no longer, and am making my way to Streit's, when out of the Jungfernstieg I turn into an arcade, full of such shops as in such places are generally to be found, and here I while away my time. Jewellers, first; I do not care to stare in at jewellers' windows in England; I seem to myself like a hungry urchin at a pastrycook's, longing after the tarts, but that rule does not hold here, and so I stare my fill, noticing all the curly snakes with ruby eyes and turquoise tails, the rings and pins, the hair-brooches (the Germans are tremendous at these, and there were shoals of those very gummy wavy hair-willow trees bent over little black tombs, with the gilt wire adjustment plainly visible), the thin little French watches, the fat German turnips, the montres Chinoises (Chinese watches, made in Geneva), with one long thin hand perpetually turning round, and rendering hopeless any attempt to tell the time; the earrings, the enormous gold skewers, arrows, hoops, arcs, shells and knobs for the hair. Printsellers: the place of honour occupied by the late Mr. Luard's pictures of "Nearing Home" and the "Welcome Arrival," and Mr. Brooks's pretty sentimentalisms of empty cradles and watching wives; close by these, and in excellent keeping, a French artist's notion of the English in Paris: English gentleman in a suit of whity-brown paper, green plaid cloth tops to his boots, a pointed moustache, and a very fluffy hat (how they do catch our peculiarities in dress, don't they?), saying to a lady, lovely, but perhaps a trifle free: "*Voulez accepter le cœur de moi ?*" in itself an excellent joke; many pictures of encounters between the Prussians and the Danes in 1848, in which the latter are always getting the worst of it, and a notable print, "*Seeschlacht bei Eckenford*" (Sea-fight at Eckenford), which sea-fight apparently consists of a Danish ship running aground, and the Germans running away. Then, a bookseller's; covered all over with their little copies of "*Die Londoner Vertrag*" (the London Treaty of 1852), with numerous French and German books, and some gaudy coloured English works, one of which, I am inclined to think by its title, "*Daddy Goriot, or Unrequited Affection*," cannot be entirely original, but may have some connexion with a French gentleman, one Honoré de Balzac, deceased. Then a photographer's; where I am refreshed at finding what I, of course, have never seen in my own land—carte de visite portraits of the Prince and Princess of Wales, also of Herr von Bismark the great Prussian firebrand, also of Fraulein Delia and Fraulein Lucca, great operatic stars, in all kinds of costume; also the portrait of a gentleman, with parti-coloured cheeks, a cock's-comb head-dress and fantastic dress, with a legend underneath, stating it to be the effigy of "*Herr Price, Clown, Circus Renz*."

A lengthened tour of inspection of this arcade, and a chat with the tobaccoist of whom I buy some cigars, brings me close to four o'clock, when Streit rings his bell for table d'hôte, and I find

myself one of half a dozen civilians, all the rest of the guests being Austrian and Prussian officers. When they find I am a foreigner (they think I am a Russian) these gentlemen are very polite, including me in their conversation, clinking glasses with me, &c., while they scowl upon the civilians of their own country, and take no notice of them. The conversation turns upon the part played by England in this war, and I have the satisfaction of hearing my country and its ministers very roundly abused: so roundly, that at length I declare my nationality and receive all sorts of apologies from my friends, who deprecate any idea of personality, but who still decry our English policy, and who tell me that the unpopularity of England throughout Germany is terrible. In due course after which, I take my candle and go to bed, having to be up at daybreak, to start once more on the public service.

#### THE MAGICIAN'S SERVANT.

ABOU-BEN-ALI was a great magician,  
A wonder-working wizard, feared and dreaded.  
Deep in a lonely lane of Cairo old  
Your dreary way unto his house you threaded.

Out by the Desert gate, a lonely part,  
Hid among gardens and deserted fountains,  
It stood, and from the roof-top you could plainly see  
The Pyramids rising like sapphire mountains.

A great blind house with windows closely matted,  
Save where the water-bottle was suspended,  
To catch the outer air; how bare it crouched  
In sunless twilight that was never ended.

Past a deserted mosque and drug bazaar,  
Where the rich myrrh diffused a mystic fragrance,  
And near a tall but shattered minaret,  
From whence a vulture watched some sleeping va-grants.

The Leper Hospital was near its garden there,  
The lolling gourds unheededly grew yellow,  
And date-trees held beyond one's reach the fruit,  
In bunches that all Egypt could not follow.

And by its plaster wall a beggar sat—  
Blind Hadji—droning o'er his Koran verses,  
While his lean dog sat looking in his face,  
Like critic at a poet who rehearses.

Hard by a fountain, bountiful as he  
Who wrote above the tap those lines in Persian,  
Half-naked urchins played at pilgrimage,  
Or of the Nile-songs gave the newest version.

And no one but a half-crazed dervish passed,  
Bowing to nothing; with a long cane flapping  
Upon his bony shoulders, and a bowl  
That with a broken flute he still kept rapping.

There were no women peeping from the roof,  
No black slaves at the threshold grinned or cackled,  
No sound of lute or hands that beat in time,  
No rose-striped curtains o'er the court-yard tackled.

Only a dreary round of sullen rooms,  
All bare but for a cushion or some matting;  
A lamp before a niche, a bowl or two,  
And piles of books in Syriac, Greek, and Latin—

Coptic and Arabic, Armenian too,  
With here and there a Talmud, and a treatise  
On the Cabala or the Mysteries,  
In old Egyptian, which to wizards sweet is.

An ivory rod, a skull or two of Pharaohs',  
That answered questions if examined rightly,  
Huge chests of poisons, stupifying drugs,  
And the brown incense crushed for burning nightly.

But I had quite forgot; there was one room  
Paved and walled in with mummies, brown and sable,  
The very ceiling mummies; a gilt coffin case  
Served as old Abou-Ali's study table.

And each one down the long and level line,  
Held out its stiffened arm, as if in warning,  
And staring stood like yawning sentinel,  
Waiting the trumpet of the judgment morning.

All Egypt's rank and beauty withered up  
Was there in audience; in the neighbouring chamber,  
The walls with spheres and stars were blazoned  
thick,  
With silver moons, and suns of gold and amber.

And the last room, most terrible of all,  
Was roofed with dead men's eyes; each withered  
jewel  
Some alchemist had charred in search of spells,  
And turned its diamond light to cindered fuel.

The only guardian of this awful house  
Was Hassan, foolish son of an old weaver,  
A gaping, prying, idle, thoughtless dolt,  
A fingering, tipsy, lazy, hair-brained thief.

In shuddering curiosity he roamed  
From room to room, eying each mighty folio,  
Pinching the mummies, sniffing at the drugs,  
Eager to see the whole of that great olio.

Ali was in the desert, sifting out  
From scorpions' holes and vultures' nests a powder,  
Of great intensity of poison; all alone  
Was Hassan, who grew hourly lazier, prouder.

The old Jew's daughter last week ran away,  
The cobbler by the fountain lay bedridden,  
The slipper-seller was tied up at home,  
And for his idling being sorely chidden.

First from the door, and then the window looked  
That monkey Hassan, dreading most his master;  
Then to the mummy room in mischief swift,  
Heedless of woe, and careless of disaster.

Out came the special book, a parchment tome,  
Open the special leaf—the lamp was nourished  
With magic oil of mummies' tongues, and lo!  
He seized the rod that Abou-Ali cherished.

And read the potent words, and bade Aldeboron  
To save him toil, go fetch the sweet Nile water,  
Some three full pails, and this in Satan's name,  
And great Taxana's, his dear eldest daughter.

Then spread a demon laugh among the dead,  
That made his hair rise, as a mummy springing  
Leaped from the room, forced by that wondrous spell,  
In spite of all the other mummies to him clinging.

Back with the water-pails, and swilling out  
Over the floor in streams the Nile flood courses;  
Back with the slopping pails, with all the speed  
And strength of ten untiring, untamed desert horses.

An inundation all before its time—  
Alas! the fool is like a wild duck swimming,  
And every moment higher floats the tide,  
And all the ground floor now is full and brimming.

Swish, wash, and gurgle, bubble, ripple, rush,  
It rises to the waist of frightened Hassan,  
Nay, to the chin, in vain he's shouting out,  
"Stay, goblin, stay, you're surely no assassin!"

The books are gone, all swept off by the flood;  
He splashes, tumbles, swims, and swimming cla-  
mours,

But yet the laughing goblin at his toil  
Continues, till poor Hassan fainter stammers:

"Stop, stop; give me the book. I'm drowning, man;  
Stop, or you'll kill me. Save me, prophet sainted—  
Save me, Mohammed"—in his ears and mouth  
The cruel water rushed, and then he fainted.

\* \* \* \* \*

When he awoke, within the baled out room  
Stood Abou Ali, his wrath lord and master,  
Beating him with a palm-stick, as the cause  
Of all this desolation and disaster.

"Another time, you blockhead," Ali said,  
"Before you read the spell that starts the goblin,  
Learn that which lays him;" here he fell again  
To thrashing him, with energy redoubling.

Then stripped him of his turban, gay and yellow,  
And of his robe and sash, without remorse or pity,  
And by the shoulders took him, and with kicks  
Dismissed him, howling, from the sacred city.

#### PROMOTERS OF COMPANIES.

Nor many months ago, I was doing my best  
to obtain employment in London. "Beggars  
must not be choosers," and I was determined  
to accept any appointment I could get, provided  
I thought myself tolerably competent to fulfil  
the duties of the situation. One morning, when  
looking over the Times, the following advertise-  
ment caught my eye:

**"WANTED**, for a first-class Joint-Stock  
Company, a SECRETARY.—Apply, by  
letter, stating what salary is expected, and giving  
references, to A. L., 109, Little Green-street, E.C."

Within half an hour of my having read this,  
I had written and posted a letter addressed to  
"A. L.," and had told that personage I was in  
want of exactly such an appointment as he de-  
scribed in his advertisement; that, as regarded  
salary, I must be allowed to learn what duties  
were expected of me before I could state the  
amount of payment I should require; that, in  
any case, I thought we should not quarrel about  
terms; lastly, I gave the names of two or three  
gentlemen in London, to whom I could refer as  
regarded my character, capabilities, &c.; in con-  
clusion, I begged to know the name of the "first-  
class Joint-stock Company" that was in want  
of a secretary?

To my surprise, I did not get an answer for  
three days, and, when it came, the letter gave  
me so little information that I inclined at first  
to have nothing more to say either to "A. L."

or his secretaryship. The very names both of "A. L." and his "first-class Joint-stock Company" were still hidden from me, the writer merely telling me that the company in want of a secretary was "one of the very first in London," and finishing his very short communication by asking whether, in the event of my obtaining the situation, I should "be prepared to lay down the sum of five hundred pounds sterling?"

To this, I replied that, as far as the money was concerned, I had friends who were ready to advance such a sum on my account, provided the situation I obtained was of such a kind as to give me an income of not less than three hundred a year in a respectable public company. But that I should take no more steps in the matter, nor would I answer any more letters, unless I was at once furnished with full particulars of the proposed secretaryship, and was at once made acquainted with the real name of "A. L.," and with the means by which he proposed to obtain the appointment for me.

In twenty-four hours after despatching my letter, I received a long official-looking envelope, which contained a letter signed by "A. L.," in what he informed me was his real name—Alfred Long—and also the printed prospectus of a new joint-stock company, of which more presently. Mr. Alfred Long informed me that he was the "promoter" of this proposed company, but that "to bring it out" he required the sum of five hundred pounds for advertising and other expenses; and that if I or my friends would advance that amount, he would give me what he called "a written bond" that I should be appointed secretary of the company, at a salary of not four but five hundred a year. The printed prospectus was magnificent. The company was for the purpose of providing London with gas on an entirely new plan, which would—so the prospectus said—at once and for ever crush all existing gas companies. The capital required was three millions sterling, in sixty thousand shares of fifty pounds each, one pound per share to be paid on application; and the interest the company would pay when at work, could not by any possible combination of circumstances be less than fifty per cent per annum, while there was every chance of its increasing in a few years to a hundred, and even a hundred and fifty. In the body of the prospectus were several certificates from eminent chemists and others, all stating that this peculiar gas—I do not mention its particular name—was two hundred per cent cheaper, and gave a hundred per cent stronger light, than any gas now in use, and that its adoption by any town could not fail to prove highly remunerative to those who furnished it. To this were added several columns of figures proving—or intending to prove—that whereas the gas now used in London cost so many thousands to produce, the proposed kind costing so much less, the result must be so many hundreds of thousands of pounds profit for the company.

In short, nothing could be more magnificent—on paper—than this scheme; but, as I re-

marked when answering Mr. Alfred Long's letter, I questioned very much whether a company in which there were as yet neither directors, solicitors, bankers, brokers, nor shareholders, was exactly the thing which could properly be termed "a first-class Joint-stock Company," and that, although I wished the scheme every success, I must decline having anything more to do with it.

Here I thought the whole affair would end, and that I should hear no more of Mr. Alfred Long or his gas company. To my surprise, I received another letter by return of post from that gentleman, in which he begged I would not, for my own sake, be rash and throw aside the chance of becoming secretary of what would no doubt some day be one of the very first public companies in London, if not in the world; that I was quite mistaken regarding there being no board of directors formed for the company, because he had some of the very "first men in the City" ready to join the direction at once; but that there were several preliminary expenses to be incurred before the publication of the whole prospectus could take place; that these gentlemen had given him their names in confidence, but that so soon as ever he could meet certain necessary expenses, the whole affair would be brought out, and that then it would be too late to apply for the secretaryship, for there would be so many men of wealth and influence seeking the situation, that it would be impossible for him to offer it to me. His own capital was locked up, but if I would advance the sum of two hundred pounds at once, he would take my bond for the balance of three hundred, to be paid the day the company was in full operation. The letter was well written, and there was a cool audacity about the fellow asking me to advance this amount of coin on a scheme so visionary, that I determined, if possible, to see what kind or manner of man it was who could believe any one, idiot enough to pay money, with so very remote a chance of ever—or rather with the certainty of never—seeing it again. I therefore replied to his letter that there was, no doubt, some truth in what he said about not throwing away the chance of a good situation, but that before I could take any steps in the affair, I must have a personal interview with him, Mr. Alfred Long; that he had only to name the hour and place when he would meet me in the City; and I would be sure to keep the appointment.

To this proposition I received an answer, saying that the writer, Mr. Long, was very unwell, but that his friend, Mr. Adam, would meet me the following day at noon, at a certain tavern in Cheapside. On receipt of this note, I became more than ever determined to see Mr. Long himself. I therefore replied that my business was with Mr. Long, and not with Mr. Adam; that if the former were unwell, I could wait a few days; but that I would cease all correspondence on the subject, unless within the next week or ten days I saw and spoke to Mr. Alfred Long.

The letter which reached me by return of post surprised me not a little, although I had by this time conceived very high notions of Mr. Alfred Long's boldness in finance. His epistle was long, and took a very round-about way of coming to the point: which was to announce that he had been for some six months in Whitecross-street prison for debt, but that if I would favour him with a call, he had no doubt that matters would be explained entirely to my satisfaction. To Whitecross-street prison I accordingly went. On my inquiring for Mr. Long, a corpulent clerical looking man, aged about sixty, and with the general appearance of an insolvent arch-deacon, came forward to greet me. He did not waste time, but plunged at once into business, bringing forth piles upon piles of documents, both written and printed, to prove that the new gas scheme was beyond all doubt "the very best thing" that had been brought forward by any joint-stock company for many years, and that all who took shares would be certain to make their fortunes. He told me a long story how he had been arrested for "a mere trifle; less than fifty pounds, sir," and how he hoped, with a portion of the two hundred which I was to advance, to set himself free, and, within a week, to establish the "first-class Joint-stock Company," with its three millions of capital. To this I objected that, under present circumstances, I did not see my way clearly towards advancing any money, and that before doing so I must consult with friends who would no doubt object to my taking any steps in the affair until I had some knowledge as to the composition of the future board of directors of the great gas company. This, not very unreasonable, objection Mr. Long met by asserting that the board was already filled up, and that "some of the leading men in the City, sir," were only waiting for him to say he was ready, in order to lend their names at once to the scheme. I suggested that it might be better, perhaps, if some of these "leading men in the City" were, among them, to advance the two hundred pounds, and so release Mr. Long from prison, as well as set the proposed scheme on its legs. To capitalists like them, I urged, the loss of a couple of hundred pounds amongst them would be a mere nothing, whereas to a very poor man like me it would be almost ruin. But Mr. Long did not see things in that light. He said I did not understand these sort of affairs, that it would never do for him to ask these leading City men for the insignificant sum of two hundred pounds, and that I was decidedly standing in my own light by not risking so little to gain so much. He ended by saying, if I could not lay my hand on the money at once, my "acceptance at three months" would do nearly as well, for he could get it discounted through a friend of his. But I objected that I never wrote my name across stamped paper, and upon that we parted.

Mr. Alfred Long was the first "promoter" with whom I became acquainted, and he was not the least singular man I have met, in his notions as to the way of getting up a "first-

class Joint-stock Company." I don't think he was altogether dishonest, although certainly not the sort of person I would name in my will as trustee for my widow and children. He seemed to have talked and written himself into a belief of his own falsehoods, and to have an idea that the rest of the world was as easy to deceive. I have never seen or heard more of Mr. Alfred Long. We parted good enough friends, though he warned me that I would repent having thrown such a chance away. However, I have not yet seen his gas company advertised in the Times, although it is not long since I thought I recognised, under different initials, the advertisement that a secretary for a "first-class Joint-stock Company" was still wanted.

"If you really want to get the secretaryship of a public company," said a friend of mine, who is a merchant in the City, "I'll introduce you to Mr. Hunter: a most respectable man, who is a promoter of new schemes. He is sure to have something on hand that will suit you, and I have no doubt that you and he can come to terms." My friend was himself far too honourable a man to have anything to do with those who were otherwise, so I thankfully accepted his offer, and was introduced to Mr. Hunter: whose profession, as my introducer told me, was that of a "promoter," but who was a very different sort of person from my acquaintance in Whitecross-street. Mr. Hunter had an office of his own. It is true the said office—situated in a dismal dingy court somewhere behind Austin Friars—consisted of only one room, and that room up three steep flights of stairs; nevertheless it *was* an office, in which was a clerk—age, I should say, about fourteen years—and in both his clerk and his office Mr. Hunter seemed to take great pride. He could not talk on any subject for five consecutive minutes, without mentioning either "my clerk" or "my office:" though he appeared to make little or no use of the one, and to confine himself not more than forty minutes, during the whole working hours of the day, to the other.

Although Mr. Hunter was by profession and calling a "promoter," I don't think he made much by his proposed schemes. One of three things seemed always to happen to him: either he could not get together directors enough to bring out a new company; or else he got too many, and could not get rid of some without offending them; or, at the eleventh hour some other person got hold of his scheme, and brought it out, as he used to lament, "over my head, sir." Thus, the idea of the "Anglican Gallic and German Bank (limited)," had originated with this unfortunate gentleman. He it was who worked out the plan for months, and just as he had got a board of good men together, a treacherous friend saw the prospectus of the proposed bank, changed its name to the "English, French, and Saxon Banking Corporation (limited)," got a board of directors, solicitors, bankers, brokers, and secretary, together in a single forenoon, brought out the affair next day

in the Times, Daily Telegraph, Morning Post, Daily News, and all the other morning papers, and pocketed a thousand pounds by way of what is called "promotion money." Thus poor Mr. Hunter was left with his fiasco of a scheme, and the dubious gratification of paying for the printed prospectus.

When I first became acquainted with Mr. Hunter, his greatest trouble used to be his having, not too little, but too much, money at command. He was the first and only man I ever knew who felt annoyed by being too wealthy. He used to complain that the government of—I really forget whether it was Brazil, Peru, or the Argentine Republic—a South American state—had commissioned him to procure a loan of eight millions sterling, and that after he had negotiated the affair and got it all right, they wrote to say they only wanted five millions. "What to do with the other three millions I am sure I don't know, sir," he used to repeat three or four times every day. It was in vain I suggested that a few thousands, or even a few hundreds, might be carefully employed as a loan to himself, for I could not help seeing that poor Mr. Hunter's means were often like the shares of the joint-stock companies which he promoted—limited. Even in so small a matter as postage-stamps I had often to help him, and I could not but be cognisant—though I pretended entire ignorance—of sundry sulky visitors who from time to time called at the office, and asked whether "Mr. 'Unter was going to settle that 'ere small bill, or whether they"—the speakers' employers, I presume—"should have to county court him?"

But, with all this, I believe Mr. Hunter to be an honest and honourable man. My own business with him was confined to procuring him the names of four "good City men" as directors for the board of a joint-stock company he was then forming; and my share of the loaves and fishes was to be, that if it were brought out I was to get the secretaryship. The company was not brought out, and therefore I did not get the secretaryship. In less than a week I had the names of "four good City men," who were willing to join the company as directors, provided the rest of the board was composed of respectable men. These Mr. Hunter had to find, but he never managed to find them. Somehow or other, no sooner did he get four gentlemen to consent to come upon his board, than three of them discovered that the fourth was "worth nothing, a mere man of straw," and so they at once resigned, and joined some rival scheme. These were the days—not long ago—when every morning's paper was certain to bring forth some new prospectus of a Joint-stock Bank, or a Finance and Credit Association. Poor Mr. Hunter felt that, while the grass was growing all around him, he, the horse, was starving. However, he never lost courage or hope. Every morning when I visited his office he had some new combination by which he was certain to have "a first-rate board formed before Saturday;" but week after week passed by and

nothing came of it, and to this day I believe he is working hard to bring out his scheme. Occasionally, but very seldom, Mr. Hunter would have small windfalls in the way of cash, or, at any rate, would receive—I don't know whence, or from whom—small sums of money, which he would parade ostentatiously. On such occasions he would always insist upon repaying me any money I had expended for postage-stamps, bitter beer, luncheons, or such like: of all of which he kept a very rigid account, and, indeed, I believe I am his debtor to the amount of sevenpence. I am afraid Mr. Hunter does not prosper. I wish him every success in life, but fear his means are not increasing. However, I met him a very few days ago in the City, when he told me he was on the point of bringing out a new scheme, so great, and with so large a capital, that the bare recital of the project took my breath away. The promoter's fees alone would amount—so Mr. Hunter said—to upwards of three thousand pounds, and the sole promoter of the concern was Mr. Hunter. But I have not yet seen the prospectus advertised in the Times, and as the information was given me in confidence, I must not allude to it further.

The next practitioner in the promoter line with whom I became acquainted, was a gentleman of quite a different kind from Mr. Alfred Long, and from Mr. Hunter too.

Mr. Hardy—for that was his name—had in appearance the combined characteristics of the guardsman and the stockbroker. His hat, shirt collar, scarf, pin, coat, trousers, boots, and umbrella, were undeniably and unmistakably West-endish; his moustache, whiskers, and gloves would have passed muster in the Household Brigade, or at Aldershot. Yet he had about him, habits and customs which savoured strongly of Capel-court. Thus, when once he was in the City, his umbrella was laid aside in his office, his gloves were taken off and crushed up together in one hand, he did not walk, but rushed from place to place, and in the hand which did not hold the gloves, there were always three or four papers: one of which was certain to be a crossed cheque for a large amount—nothing under three figures at least. And yet Mr. Hardy was not a stockbroker, or a stockjobber, or a solicitor, or a merchant, or an accountant; he was simply and solely a promoter. His offices consisted of two light airy convenient rooms, for which he must have paid a rent of at least two hundred a year. They were handsomely furnished and well warmed. In the outer room, were two clerks—a young man and a boy; in the inner apartment Mr. Hardy was always—when not engaged in running about the City with a crossed cheque in his hand—closeted with some mysterious personage. The first time I saw Mr. Hardy was in this wise. I had written to him, enclosing a letter of introduction from a mutual friend, asking on what day, and at what hour, I might call upon him to speak on a matter of business. The answer was, that if I called the next day but one, "at two o'clock precisely," Mr. Hardy would be glad to see me.

At five minutes before the hour, I was at his office, and sent in my card, through the clerk, who came back into the outer room, saying, Mr. Hardy was particularly engaged, but would see me in five minutes. I waited nearly half an hour, when the bell summoned the clerk, who returned and ushered me into the sanctum of the great promoter. The latter greeted me with, "Now, my dear sir, I can only give you ten minutes, as I have three special meetings to attend before five o'clock." He made notes of what I had to say, at the same time eating his luncheon of biscuits and sherry, of which he asked me to partake. Before the ten minutes were half over, he had appointed another interview for me, and had politely bowed me out. Almost as soon as I got into the street, I saw him rushing across, his gloves crumpled up in one hand, and several papers (one of which, I believe, was a cheque) in the other.

Mr. Hardy was a prosperous man, but how he ever got through any real business by hurrying and rushing about the City, was always matter of wonder to me. And yet, he must have found the profession of promoter, lucrative, else how could the office-rent, the clerks' salaries, and his own dress be paid for? Or, whence could the crossed cheques have come? He showed me from time to time—always in strict confidence—two or three of his different schemes; and I am bound to say that—unlike the proposed prospectuses of poor Mr. Hunter—sooner or later, these invariably appeared in the advertising columns of the Times, Post, Telegraph, and Daily News. These advertisements alone must have cost him a fortune, though, I presume, that when a company "came out," the amount he had expended was repaid him. On one occasion, I was sitting with him in his inner room, when the elder of his two clerks asked for a cheque for the advertising of the "Columbian Banking Corporation:" a new scheme, of which the immensely long prospectus had appeared for the first time in all the morning papers of that day. "How much does it come to?" asked Mr. Hardy. "Four, six, one, and fifteen, sir," answered the clerk. "Write it out and bring it me to sign," said Mr. Hardy, taking his cheque-book out of a drawer, and tossing it over to the clerk. In five minutes the clerk came back with a cheque filled in for four hundred and sixty-one pounds, fifteen shillings, which his master signed, still continuing his conversation with me, and with far less care than I should have bestowed on the signing of a cheque for five pounds. I asked Mr. Hardy—for by this time I knew him better—whether all that sum was for the advertising of one single scheme? He replied that it was, and for one single day, too. That before a company was brought out, or rather before the distribution of its shares took place, between two and three thousand pounds were generally expended in advertisements, which simply published the names of the directors and the prospectus of the scheme. That if the proposed company does not "take" with the public, or if the shares are not all ap-

plied for, and if—in the language of the City—"the scheme won't float," all the expenses that have been incurred fall upon the promoter, who is, consequently, often a considerable loser by an affair of the kind. The profession of promoter is, however, something like the African slave trade, in which those who engage in the business can afford to lose three or four cargoes, provided one in every four succeeds in getting safe to Havannah, so great is the profit upon a ship-load of negroes that arrives safe at its destination. Moreover, an experienced promoter takes care, as a general rule, not to bring forward a joint-stock company unless he is pretty sure that the shares will be taken up.

As a matter of course, the promoter is sometimes mistaken, and for some unknown reason or other, neither the public nor the Stock Exchange will have anything to do with an undertaking which promises well for those who join it; while, on the other hand, bubbles and swindles often find favour with the multitude, and are quoted at a premium, even before the shares are allotted. Much, however, depends upon the names of the directors who form the board. If these are "good City men," men known to be wealthy, or belonging to wealthy firms—or if even three or four of them be so reputed—almost any scheme will "float" well: which means, that its shares will be readily applied for, and quickly bought up, by the public. It is not, however, those companies which come out at the highest premiums that may be considered as the best or safest investments for money. On the contrary, some of those which, for a time, command little or no premium, have often the best boards of direction, and are the safest in the long run. Between the period when a new joint-stock company is first advertised, and the day when no more applications for shares are received, the promoters of the scheme often do their best to run up the scrip by fictitious buying and selling—"rigging the market," as it is called—of the future shares, by means of two or three stockbrokers, who act upon orders, and create a demand for the new stock. Thus, if the "Columbian Banking Corporation" prospectus appeared in the advertising columns of the Times for the first time on Monday morning, it is very likely that the shares would be quoted in the City articles of the evening papers as being at two-thirds-quarters to two-seven-eighths premium. In other words, any one who had any shares of the said "Columbian Bank" allotted to him, might sell them—or rather might sell even the promise of them—at a premium of two pounds fifteen shillings to two pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence each. Now, as the deposit that has to be paid upon each share before application, is only one pound, the outside public reason with themselves that the speculation cannot be a bad one; for it is hardly possible—so they think—to lose the one pound deposit, whereas they have a good chance of winning nearly three pounds on each share. The theory of this is good, but the practice often otherwise.

The scheme may be an excellent one, the directors may be all "good City men," and yet the shareholders may take fright, and themselves ruin their own prospects. For, when they no longer see the scheme in which they have taken shares, quoted at a premium—a premium which their own common sense should tell them must be, more or less, a sham—they at once rush to sell their shares, and thus themselves depreciate their own property. If the public would exercise judgment before they buy shares, and patience after their purchases are made, they would do much better than by taking alarm at the first depreciation that happens to the stock in which they have invested. So doing, they help, as it were, to burn down their own property, and in effecting their own ruin.

### CAPTAIN BLUENOSE.

"GREAT news, glorious news! Victory! The Danes are falling back! Flensburg has been taken. Flensburg has hoisted the German colours. *Hoch liebe Deutschland!*" bawled a hundred voices at once, and the bells in the church tower rang out their merriest peal, while the little village was decked with ribands and boughs and flowers, as gaily as for a fair. There were crowds in the straggling street; and, from the open windows of most of the houses, hung out the gaudy German flag, the tricolor of the Fatherland. Young and old wore cockades and rosettes of the national colours, and had joyous faces and busy tongues. For the village of Steerup, on the direct road from the strong fortress of Flensburg to the little harbour of Kappel, is a village in which the Germans outnumber the Danes in a proportion of at least three to one.

"May Nip and Nock throttle the noisy swine!" growled the old man who walked by my side, and who, like myself, found his progress so much impeded by the gesticulating groups in front of every beer-house and tavern, that his usual swinging stride was reduced to a slow step. "Let us turn up this lane to the left, Mr. Harry, and get clear of the traitorous crew. This is no place for a Dane. If I had but a couple of guns charged with grape——"

"Halloa, Captain Bluenose! you seem out of sorts! Learn to change with the times, old sailor; cast your Danish skin, as the snakes do in summer, and come forth in sprucer guise as a true patriot and a Schleswiger. Here is a pot of the best beer Rostock ever brewed, in which to drink the freedom of Schleswig-Holstein," broke in a half-tipsy German, advancing towards my guide, and holding out a tankard invitingly, while his companions set up a jeering laugh; for they knew the old "skipper's" Danish sentiments too well to doubt the reception which such a proffer would meet with from him. Indeed, a scuffle seemed more than probable, when a sudden shout of "Here they are: here they come!" and a rush on the part of the throng to some safe place—such as the

gateways of yards, or the mouths of lanes and alleys—cut short the threatened quarrel, and my curiosity kept me in the village street, while the old man, muttering curses on the mutineers, remained at my side. We heard the roll of drums and the heavy tramp of marching men, and strained our eyes towards the Flensburg road, whence a cloud of dust began slowly to whirl along before the light summer breeze. What we were about to see was no doubtful spectacle. The Danish troops, beaten back at all points by the weight of superior numbers, were retreating towards the islands, and a column of infantry was to pass through Steerup; the artillery, cavalry, and baggage, with the bulk of the army, being sent along the broader causeway that traverses Hollebul. The Prussians and the insurrectionary army of Schleswig-Holsteiners had already occupied the principal towns of the duchy, and the Isle of Alsen was spoken of as the probable refuge of the overmatched Danes.

On they came, marching regularly enough, and preserving a martial aspect; but, for all that, the sight was a melancholy one. There was a gloomy expression on the faces of the beaten soldiers, but it varied much. Some looked sullenly downwards, as if unwilling to catch the eye of any spectator of their disaster, others stared defiantly at the unsympathising faces of the bystanders, and a few preserved a bright bold look, as of men who had done their best, and who had only succumbed to odds that no courage could cope with. Many were wounded, having a bloody handkerchief tied around their brows, or wearing an arm in a sling, and some were footsore, or lamed by slight gun-shot hurts, and had to limp painfully to keep up with the rest. The drums beat, and the colours fluttered; but there was a funereal sadness about the pageant; and, by the dark looks of the Danes, I could see that they knew they were passing through a crowd of ill-wishers.

Still, if no cheer, no friendly word, greeted the retiring troops, it is equally certain that no actual insult was offered to them. Not a villager spoke above breath. Indeed, the men kept back, though the women pressed forward as if to show the breast-knots and fluttering streamers of the German colours, and the Schleswig-Holstein rosettes, that they wore. The bells in the church tower had ceased their clangour; but, of course, the flags still flaunted from roof, and spire, and casement, and wherever the Danes cast their eyes they were met by signs of mute hostility. The discipline of the troops, and the temper of their chiefs, were such as surprised me. Without a threat, or a menacing gesture, they pushed steadily on; though once I saw a tall officer, whose arm was in a sling and bandaged, look up at the gaudy banner, red, black, and gold, that flapped on the church tower, and clutch his drawn sword the tighter with his uninjured hand, as he bent his head and strode on. And, when the Danish rear-guard was passing the last houses of Steerup, the bells struck up the joy-peal again, while the people raised an insulting shout of:

"Run, Danes, or Prussians will catch you! Schleswig-Holstein gläube!" And, at that taunt, a dozen soldiers faced-about, and ordered arms, as if to fire; but an officer hurried back; the muskets were shouldered again, and the faint sound of the Danish drum soon died away in the distance.

"Let us go home," said Captain Bluenose, with an extra hoarseness in his deep strong voice; and home we went. The home whither I, an English lad of seventeen, and my surly guide, were wending our way under the load of rods, and leaping-poles, and ereels well filled with pike and perch, was Fladswäst, a village lying north of Steerup, and nearer to the fens and the coast. If Steerup was chiefly German (though there were Danish families too, sitting, with sad hearts, in back rooms, and trying to shut out the clamour of the enemies of their country), Fladswäst was as Scandinavian as Harold Harfager. Quite nine houses out of ten were inhabited by people of the pure Danish stock; many of them natives of the isles, or North Jutland. But the most thorough Dane, in heart and soul, that dwelt in Fladswäst, was certainly my guide, philosopher, and friend, in all matters of boating, fishing, and fowling, Captain Bluenose.

This old man's real name was Peter Voss. He was a Laaland man. He had served, I think, as a "powder monkey," but at any rate as a boy, on board one of the Danish frigates in the Copenhagen sea-fight of 1807. An unlucky shot from some English ship had fired the Dane's magazine, doing dreadful mischief, and blowing poor little Peter, as he phrased it, "like a feather" up the hatchway. The child was not maimed nor blinded; but a quantity of the loose gunpowder was blown into his face, and disfigured him for life, producing the effect of a ghastly and indelible tattooing. Hence, Peter Voss received the nickname of Bluenose, which stuck to him to the last. He had been man-of-war's-man, smuggler, boatswain of an Indian, a Singapore pilot, mate of an opium clipper, and what not. At last he had come back, well to do, from the far East; had married the heiress of a small Schleswig farmer, and succeeded in right of his wife to the farm. But he had never quite divorced himself from the blue water on which his best years had been spent. He was still master and owner of a tidy sloop, lying at Kappel, and made many a profitable cruise, selling grain and bullocks among the islands, and bringing back eider-down, salt fish, wool, and Norway spars. Hence he was always called Schipper Blauness, a name which I Anglicised into Captain Bluenose, much to its owner's satisfaction.

For the tough old seaman bore no grudge to the Britons for his own share of the defeat which "Nelson and the North" inflicted on Prince Frederick's fleet. If we English had not seized the ships, he was wont to say, the French would, and he was rather proud, than otherwise, of the manly resistance which had been offered to so mighty a neighbour. And he had served on board

an English man-of-war, where he had learned to speak our tongue very intelligibly, and had a curious sort of liking for whatever bore the English name. Hence, no doubt, his fancy for me, a pupil, as I was then, of Mr. Blenck, the pastor of Fladswäst, a great classical scholar and accomplished linguist, as are many persons in North Europe, whose humble life is passed within the whitewashed walls of a Lutheran manse. Mr. Blenck's stipend was small, since though his glebe was large, he did not farm it as skilfully as some of the Danish clergy, than whom, in their old-fashioned way, there are no better farmers, and he added to it by taking pupils. Three months before, there had been three English youths under the pastor's roof. But the others had been recalled, as soon as the revolutionary disturbances broke out throughout Western Europe, their parents fearing they might come to harm among the wars and riots that prevailed. I, then, was the only pupil left, and as I had a good deal of leisure, was glad to make an ally of Captain Bluenose, the best fowler and fisher in that village of fowlers and fishers, and to enjoy the sports of the country under his guidance. The skipper was well off; he could indulge himself with a holiday twice a week, without much detriment to his affairs, and it was wonderful what havoc among birds and fish his lines and nets, his guns and decoys, contrived to make.

At Voss's farm I was always a welcome guest. His wife was dead, but he was not alone in the world, for besides Han Voss, his son, he had a daughter, Lilien. Han was about my own age, a handsome, dreamy-eyed boy, with a sweet temper and a slow intellect, a direct contrast to his fierce old father; who was fiery by nature, though he had a peculiar power of concealing his emotions beneath an exterior as rigid as that of a mask. Lilien was a lovely little creature of nine or ten, with hair like rippled gold, the brightest face, the bluest eyes, and the light step of a fairy. Indeed, one might have taken the girl for a fairy, her cleverness and grace being something surprising at her years; while there was a delicacy about her appearance that almost tallied with the description of the Jutland elves. Both of old Peter's children loved him dearly, and a kind father he was to them, much as Han's lack of the old Norse shrewdness sometimes tried his temper; but Lilien was his idol. He would spend hours in carving dolls for her with his clasp knife and a bit of alder wood, and in dressing these dolls with scraps of bright-coloured rag, after the fashion of the strange nations he had seen in far-off climes. He was never weary of telling her endless stories of China, and the Malay Archipelago, and the Spanish Main, to which Lilien, on her part, would listen with breathless attention. I won the little lady's favour by relating to her some of the wonders of English civilisation, and by describing to her the railways, the steamers, the crowded shipping in the Thames, the roar, and rush, and surge of human life to be witnessed in London. To all these

things Lille Lilien—or Little Lily, as I generally called her—would listen with her grave blue eyes fixed almost wistfully upon my face, ever and anon looking inquiringly round at her father as if to ask—"Can this be true?" And when the old man nodded assent, the child would nestle close to me, and look steadily up in my face as she drank in every word. I could talk to her in English, but poor Han never picked up more than a few sentences of our language, then, as now, very common in Denmark.

A great change had come over my simple friends since the insurrection in the duchies, and the entry of the German troops. Most of the Fladswäst people, being Danes, were true to King Frederick; but their loyalty did not prompt them to any act likely to occasion the burning of their homesteads or the pillage of their barns. They drank the king's health, and wished all manner of ill to the invaders, but it was known that Captain Bluenose had vainly used his influence to raise a band of partisan soldiery to harass the German outposts. The other farmers hung back from any rash demonstration of patriotism, pointing out, not without much show of reason, how hopeless would be a guerilla struggle in such a country.

Thus it came about, as the German triumph over the Danes grew daily more assured, the old mariner became more and more silent and morose, and spent hours in gloomy and bitter thoughtfulness. Han, who admired his father, and accepted every opinion of his without question or comment, once timidly offered to enlist as a volunteer in the Danish army, and got a grim smile of approval for his pains. But old Peter would not agree to the proposal.

"Thou art so calf-headed, lad, that thou wouldst get thy simple brains knocked out in the first skirmish," said Peter, with rough kindness; "Sveyn Dumfka, that the Swedes made a ballad about, was not slower-witted than my Han, though I know my son's heart is in the right place. I'll not part with thee."

But Han, too, fell to thinking to an unaccustomed extent, and I have seen his eye kindle, and his cheek flush, many a time when I was sitting in the great kitchen, or the Sunday parlour at the farm, chatting with the skipper, or coaxing Lily to sing some old Danish song of Trolls, and Mermaids, and gallant searovers, in the quaint language that came near to the Icelandic itself. Even Lilien was more solemn than before, and often asked me if I did not "think the Trolls would come to the help of Denmark." But when I laughed at the notion of such fairy auxiliaries, Lille Lilien's look changed to one of offended dignity, and she rebuked me for ridiculing the Trolls. However, neither champion nor fairy appeared able or willing to do much for royal rule in Schleswig, since German soldiers and volunteers overran the country unmolested, and the entire German population made common cause with the invader. Still the Danish force in the island of Alsens, secured by the sea (Denmark's best friend), and backed by several

armed vessels, held out firmly, and the marshy country between Flensburg and the Baltic was still patrolled by Danish horse. A camp had been formed at a place called Flaxbye, on a swampy tongue of land nearly opposite to the island, and in this camp were quartered the Danish cavalry and one or two battalions of foot, guarding a quantity of stores and material of war, which it had not been found convenient to remove by sea. This camp, small as it was, was still an eyesore to the Germans, and it would probably have been instantly assailed, had it not been very difficult of access. The main road to Flaxbye was indeed circuitous, and in more than one place was commanded by earthworks still in Danish keeping, while pontoons would be needed for the passage of streams and creeks, the bridges over which had been blown up. So Flaxbye was left undisturbed for a little time.

M. Blenck, my worthy tutor, who would, I believe, have taught Greek without tripping over a tense or a participle, while Nero was burning Rome about his ears, expressed his mild concern that I should have grown so inattentive and unpunctual in my studies. But for the life of me I could not help it. Boy as I was, the deep thrill that pervaded the popular heart reached mine and made it quiver with sympathy for the shame, the sorrow, the desperate hopes, of those about me. Every day brought some fresh rumour: now that a Swedish army was landing; now that England was coming to the rescue; now that all Danes were to be driven from house and home, and banished. But nothing of much moment occurred, until the roll of the Prussian drums was heard in Fladswäst one fine afternoon, and I dropped my Herodotus and Lexicon, and, snatching my hat, ran out of the manse, deaf to my tutor's upbraidings.

In the little market-place, under the cool lime-trees, almost all the population of the village had collected, while the troops had been halted on the paved space in the middle of the square. I instantly guessed that some mischief was meant. Had it been designed merely to disarm the people and dismiss the Amtmann, as had been done elsewhere, a tithe of the force present would have sufficed. But as it was, my eye ranged hastily over a battalion of Prussian infantry, a company of Jagers, and some hundreds of riflemen belonging to the half-disciplined Free Corps, escorted by some cavalry and four guns. Of the cavalry about forty, or half a troop, were lancers, and I counted seventy-nine hussars. The advance of this imposing force augured ill for the security of the few Danes left on the mainland, and this thought struck others, for I heard the word,

"Flaxbye! Flaxbye!" muttered all around me.

Brigadier Hahn, who commanded the column, came forward at the head of the little knot of officers that formed his staff, and ordered silence, reining in his horse and holding up his sword to indicate that a speech was to be expected. There was a dead hush; all were so

eager to know the worst. The brigadier, a stiff martinet, but accounted a valuable and active officer, glanced frowningly to left and right. He saw anxious faces, but no smile of welcome, not a rosette of the Schleswig colours, not a scrap of tricolored ribbon. The Danes had too much manliness to curry favour with the foe by wearing these hated emblems, and the few Germans in the Fladswäst were too prudent or too kind to outrage the feelings of their neighbours.

Brigadier Hahn rated us all collectively in the purest court German, which every man and woman there, of whichever race, understood sufficiently well, save myself. I could only pick up broken scraps of the discourse, but I gathered that the Fladswästers were abused as a pack of disloyal churls, unfit for liberty, that they were threatened with all sorts of penalties for giving countenance to the cause of Denmark, and that the Prussian ended by demanding guides to show the nearest way to Flaxbye. There was a murmur, for suspicion had been exchanged for certainty. Flaxbye was to be attacked, and by surprise, if the enemy could manage it. It was well known that a road existed between our village and the Danish camp, but so miry and wet, so intricate, that few but the Fladswäst fenners, when out after wild-fowl, could have pointed out the true course. And this fact the Prussian commander evidently knew well.

"I must have two guides. Do you hear? Tausand Teiflern! must I have you pricked by bayonets to sharpen your wits!" called out the brigadier, harshly. The Free Corps began to get noisy as they heard the general's voice in anger; hard words were bandied from side to side, and I dare say the village might have been sacked, or even burned, on light provocation. But the officers were firm, and in a few moments all was quiet again. When the brigadier next spoke it was in a different key.

"Come, my lads, there's no use in making wry faces. You are all subjects of Schleswig-Holstein, and had better forget the king of Copenhagen as soon as may be. We don't want to harm peaceable people; but that wasps'-nest at Flaxbye shall be smoked out, if I have to burn fifty hamlets in the doing it. Give me guides, and I promise you protection. Come, I offer a hundred rixdollars. Will no sensible fellow step forward?"

No reply.

"Two hundred. Three," repeated the Prussian, more impatiently. A man came shouldering forward through the crowd, dragging a youth by the arm.

"I'm your man, general. For three hundred rixdollars in hard money, I'll guide you to Flaxbye, by day or night; for I know every inch of the way, and my boy here knows it as well as I do."

To my astonishment—and astonishment is a mild word for the stupefaction with which I listened to these words—the man was my own dear Captain Bluenose, the staunchest Dane in the place. The lad, of course, was Han. I think

the neighbours were as surprised as I was. They were silent for a minute, and then there broke out a storm of hissing and curses.

Old Peter stood up undaunted. His grim face betrayed no touch of shame, but Han hung his head, and I could see that he was sobbing as he stood beside his father under that hailstorm of disgrace. Some of the Prussian troopers were now ordered to ride into the crowd and enforce order, which they did by beating the people over the heads and shoulders with the flats of their swords, but not very severely, and the throng soon sunk into a dead, sullen silence. The brigadier gazed hard and long at the rugged face of his volunteer guide, and the scrutiny did not seem to satisfy him.

"You look a determined fellow. You have the air of one who has served, too," said the general, with a piercing glance at the tough old mariner. "Of course there are two sides to the bargain. Guide us well, and I pay you down the cash as soon as we have destroyed the camp. Mislead or betray us, and I will have you shot like a dog. Do you know that?"

The voice of old Voss was very thick and husky, like that of a drunken man, though it was plain that he was sober, as he replied unflinchingly:

"Herr General, I accept the bargain. My life, and Han's life, against three hundred silver dollars. I don't say it's a pleasant job, but I'm in debt over head and ears, and want to be off to America, and this money——"

"Enough, enough!" broke in the general, with an involuntary sneer; "the money shall be yours if you earn it. Corporal Hencke, take two file and guard these men. They must not give us the slip. The troops may stand at ease. The assembly will sound in due time."

I never saw such indignation, horror, or amazement, stamped on human faces as on those of the inhabitants of Fladswäst, when they thoroughly understood that the bargain was struck, and that the old skipper, hitherto respected by all, was to be the traitor who was to lead the Prussians to his countrymen's place of refuge. Some of the elder men still shook their heads, and seemed deaf to conviction, but the young and the females, more impulsive, could not find words to express their loathing for the veteran's treachery. The men, cowed by the presence of the troops, did not venture on loud speech, but some of the women set up a shrill cry of "Judas!" followed by an outburst of frantic execration, such as it was terrible to hear. I thought I saw old Voss wince a little, but his stern countenance betrayed no emotion, and I turned away with a sickness of heart such as I had never felt before. I made my way out of the village, and quickly, for already there was talk of posting sentries, on the part of the Germans, on every road, to prevent intelligence from being conveyed to the Danes. Indeed, although the bulk of the troops were crowding into the kro and beer-houses, or settling in impromptu bivouacs to take what refreshment the commissary could afford them, patrols began

to move about, and I was pursued, as I left the place, by a hoarse shout to bid me return. I pushed on, however, and was soon far from Fladswäst.

For some time I walked on rapidly, trying to drown thought by violent exertion. Then, when I found myself far along the way from the village to the sea, I passed through a gap into a meadow, flung myself on the soft turf beneath a gnarled evergreen oak, and gave myself up to thoughts that were anything but pleasant ones. Boy that I was, I knew little and cared less for the political bearings of the case; but my sympathies were with the Danes, among whom I had lived, and from whom I had received much homely kindness. I had been an honoured guest in their great farm-houses, where employers and servants sat together in primitive fashion around the huge stove in winter, and where the copper and tin vessels on the walls glittered like actual gold and silver in the candlelight. They had taught me to shoot and to manage a boat, had taken me out on many an expedition by land and water, and always vied with one another in good-natured hospitality to the lonely English lad, their pastor's pupil. And now—

I thought of my poor friends, disarmed, brow-beaten, trodden down by the German majority, and perhaps even driven from their homes and fields to make way for the conquerors. I thought of the slaughter and disgrace of the handful of troops at Flaxbye, taken unawares as they would be, and weakened, as I had but yesterday heard they were, by the withdrawal of most of the infantry either to Alsen or the strong intrenched camp of Düppel, lying north on the mainland, and at the usual ferry between the island and the Schleswig coast. And then I thought, more in sorrow than resentment, how shamefully I had been deceived in Captain Bluenose, my best friend among all those hardy fennemen, and one whom I had esteemed as a brave, honest-hearted old patriot. To be sure, he was in debt, so he said, and debt often drives men to shameful acts; but then how *could* old Bluenose be in debt. It was a puzzle to me, as I remembered his farm, freehold land, small but well stocked, his sloop, and his thrifty habits. I had got thus far in my perturbed thoughts, when something bright-coloured, like a tropic bird, went flashing past between the green hedges of the lane. I raised myself on my elbow and looked after it. It was but a moment and the trees shut it out from view, but my eye caught a glimpse of a child wearing a little scarlet cloak with a hood, such as "Lille Lilien" wore, and on account of which I often named her in jest "Little Red Riding Hood," and bade her take care lest wolves should eat her. The hood had fallen back, and a tress of the little maiden's hair hung loose and gleamed in the setting sun for an instant, then all vanished like a dream. I called her name, but there was no reply, and I supposed myself mistaken. The sun sank lower and lower, but the air was still warm, and I was in no hurry to go back to Fladswäst. It was not that I stood in awe of

M. Blenck's reproaches; my good tutor's anger at my truancy was sure to be gently expressed. But I could not endure to hear the bustle and din made by the Germans in the village, and I was averse to witnessing the humiliation of my friends. Poor Captain Bluenose! I could never again sit at his fireside or go out with him in his boat, listening gladly to his stories of far-away scenes and adventures.

Before I had gone half a mile towards home, I heard the steady tramp of troops, and the head of the column appeared. First rode two videttes, with carbines unslung. On catching sight of me, they came up at a trot, and called to me to halt. I looked about me for the means of escape, but the hedges were high and thick, and I had no choice but to obey. One of the hussars clutched me by the collar, and compelled me to walk beside his horse till I was led into the presence of Brigadier Hahn, who bluntly accused me of being a spy, and ordered me to be searched. Nothing of a compromising nature, of course, was found in my pockets; but I think the general was sorry for the circumstance. He gruffly said that "Englishers were a conceited set, and must not think to have their own way when dealing with Royal Prussian officers." Instead of suffering me to go home, he gave orders that I should be placed beside the guides, and accompany the column.

For some time, I really did not venture to look at my companions. There were tears in my own eyes, and I could not bear to look Voss in the face. Presently I stole a look at Han. To my surprise, he was no longer the shame-stricken lad who had stood beside his father that day, cowering under the popular scorn. No. His head was erect; his eye bright and bold. He looked like a young hero, marching out to battle in a good cause and with a good conscience. There was a newly-awakened intelligence in his face that seemed to transform it. Bluenose—who had betrayed his own people for German bribes—it was wonderful to see how calm he was as he walked, under a strong guard, in front of the column. Both he and his son were fastened by cords to the saddle-bows of Prussian troopers, and were vigilantly watched, but allowed to talk to each other in a low voice. The skipper gave me a nod as I was placed near him, and I suppose, even in the dusk, he saw the working of my face, since he said, quietly:

"I thought it was not the English fashion to be hasty in judging an old friend. I know what you think, boy; but, wait—wait."

Presently Han asked if I had "seen Lilien?"

"Then it was Lilien," said I, eagerly, "who ran past in her red cloak; but why—"

"Silence, all. Silence!" said an officer, who rode near; and nothing more was said. The march was conducted cautiously, without beat of drum, and the soldiers were very quiet, though the Free Corps often broke into snatches of the National Hymn, and it cost the chiefs much trouble to hush them. First rode the hussars, then came the Prussians, and thirdly

the Free Corps; then the Jagers, with cannon and lancers in the rear. It was soon dark, but though the network of lanes was most intricate, the guides knew the country so well that they never hesitated. But the roads were of the worst, and, in spite of the dry weather, the tenacious mire and deep ruts made it cruel work to drag the guns. The progress of the force was therefore slow.

The pale new moon and stars threw a cold light down upon us as we toiled on. Presently I felt the sea-breeze on my cheek, and knew that Flaxbye must be near. We were in a wild country, full of meres and brooks, with high dykes and stone walls on each side the narrow road. But the Germans were confident of an easy victory, and I heard the officers mutter congratulations to each other as we pressed on. For my own part, I was puzzled. The calm of Voss's bearing, the pride of the son's manner, which would have become a victor rather than a traitor, perplexed me. Then, if Lilien had passed me as I lay, whither was she bound, and wherefore? To these mental queries a tremendous answer was about to be returned.

The column was labouring through miry ground, where the feet sank into deep mud at every step. Suddenly a bugle sounded, and at the first note old Captain Bluenose sprang like a tiger on the dragoon at his side, wrested his sabre from him, and, cutting the cords that bound himself and Han to their captors, waved his hat high in air with his left hand, shouting, "Hurrah for old Denmark and the King!"

In an instant the long wall was bristling with levelled muskets and the heads of soldiers in the well known Danish uniform, while with a cheer of "God save Denmark!" they poured a heavy volley into the closely-packed ranks of the Prussians. Thus much I saw. I heard, too, the galloping of horse in our front, the cheers and shouts of infantry and cavalry rushing forward, the word of command among the Prussians, the yells, cries, clamour, and groans, mingled with the incessant ring of musketry. It was plain that the German troops were caught in a trap, and, from what I heard, I gathered that the raw levies of the Free Corps had given way, and that the surprise was successful and complete. Around the spot where I stood the confusion was fearful, and, as I was swept forward and driven against the bank by a rush of plunging horses, I saw a dozen sabres and pistols raised in vengeance, while I heard an angry shout to kill the guides. For one of these I was probably mistaken: a trooper spurred upon me, and dealt me a furious stroke with his sabre. The flat of the blade alone, by good luck, fell on my head; but I was beaten down on the bank, and the hussar, with

a savage curse, swung back his arm for a surer blow. Then I remember Lilien's angel face and golden hair coming between me and the soldier, and her outstretched arm as she lifted it over me in mute entreaty. Perhaps the trooper had a recollection of child-sisters of his own at home in Germany; for he hesitated to strike, and as he did so, a stray shot brought his horse to the ground. He was taken prisoner by the Danish troops, who were now in full pursuit of the retreating enemy.

Poor Captain Bluenose was not alive to share the triumph of his countrymen. He had been shot dead by one of the hussars, and lay, calm and stern as in life, while Han lay beside him, wounded, but living; and Lilian threw herself on her dear father's body with a piteous cry that I shall never forget. Han recovered from his wounds, and, when he came out of hospital, sold house and land, and took his little sister away with him to Laaland, I believe, where the old man had relations. I never saw the bright little face again; but it was well known in Denmark and Schleswig that my old friend had feigned to lead the enemy against his countrymen merely to serve the cause he loved better than life itself. He had formed the resolution in haste, and as a child would not be suspected of carrying intelligence, he had found means secretly to despatch Lilian by a shorter route with a few written words to the Danish general at Flaxbye, and hence the ambuscade and its successful results.

No man's memory is more honoured among the honest Danes of Fladswäst than that of poor old Voss, or as they love best to call him, Captain Bluenose. Nor have I ever seen the Captain's grave, in my subsequent visits to the place, in a neglected condition, or without a wreath of the freshest flowers, all the summer through. Fladswäst fell for a time into Danish hands, though the Germans soon regained it. Before that day came my parents, alarmed for my safety, recalled me to England, and it was not till long after that I revisited Denmark.

#### NEW WORK BY MR. DICKENS,

In Monthly Parts, uniform with the Original Editions of "Pickwick," "Copperfield," &c.

On APRIL 30th will be published, PART I., price 1s., of

### A NEW WORK BY CHARLES DICKENS

IN TWENTY MONTHLY PARTS.

With Illustrations by MARCUS STONE.

London: CHAPMAN and HALL, 193, Piccadilly.

Now ready, bound in cloth, price 6s. 6d.,

## THE TENTH VOLUME.

*Now publishing, securely bound in newly designed covers, and gilt edged, price Three Pounds, the TEN VOLUMES of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, completed since the Miscellany was commenced. With a General Index to afford easy reference to every article in the Work.*

*The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.*